

From C. M. George  
Index

THE MALANKARA CATHOLIC CHURCH

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The ~~Syria~~ Malankara Syrian Catholic Church  
(India)

This paper is ~~presente~~ submitted  
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CONTEMPORARY ASIAN CHRISTIANITY

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Mr. Sam Moffett.

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## The Pope's visit

The Pope had a particular word of affection for the Syro-Malankara Church. "Your Church, beloved brothers & sisters, traces its origin to the apostle St. Thomas. You possess a very ancient liturgical tradition, which had its origin in Antioch - where the followers of Jesus were first called 'Christians' --- For more than 16 centuries your community remained in unbroken communion with the See of Peter. Then there was a series of difficulties which interrupted that communion. But this century has been indelibly marked by the luminous figure of Abp. Mar Ivanios, who found wisdom

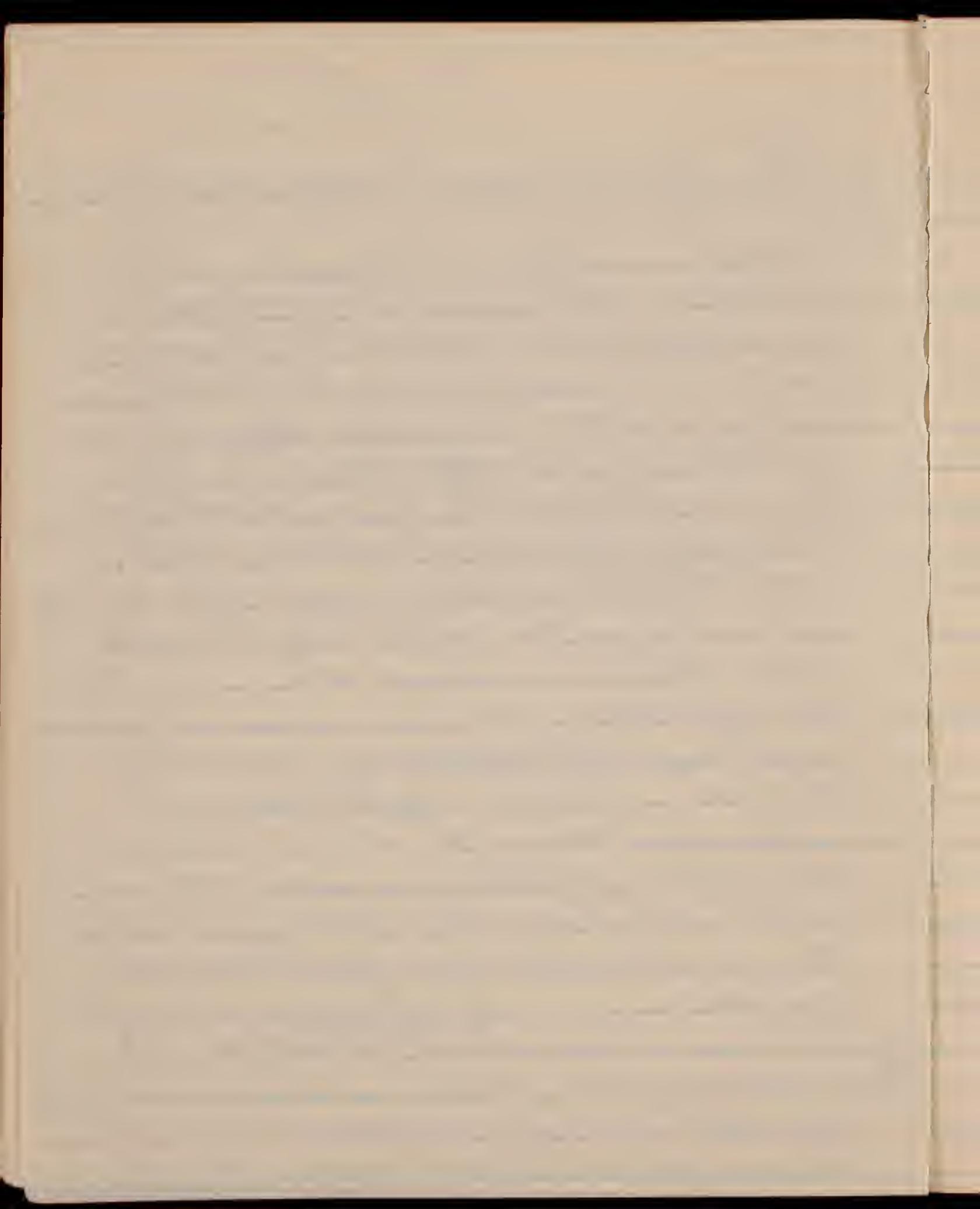
## The Malankara Syrian Catholic Church (India)

'Denomination' in this paper is used in the sense of a cluster of congregations, generally with an agreed body of doctrine, polity, or an ethnic unity. They act together and regard themselves as one branch of the Church. (McGavarn: Ethnic Realities p. 5).

'Denomination' is synonymous with the term 'particular Church' defined in the Decree on the Catholic Eastern Churches of the Second Vatican Council as "organically united in the Holy Spirit through the same faith, the same sacraments, and the same government" and "held together by a hierarchy".

They are sometimes referred to as 'individual Churches' or 'rites'. (Decree: Orientalium Ecclesiarum art. 2). The word 'rite' means more than liturgical customs.

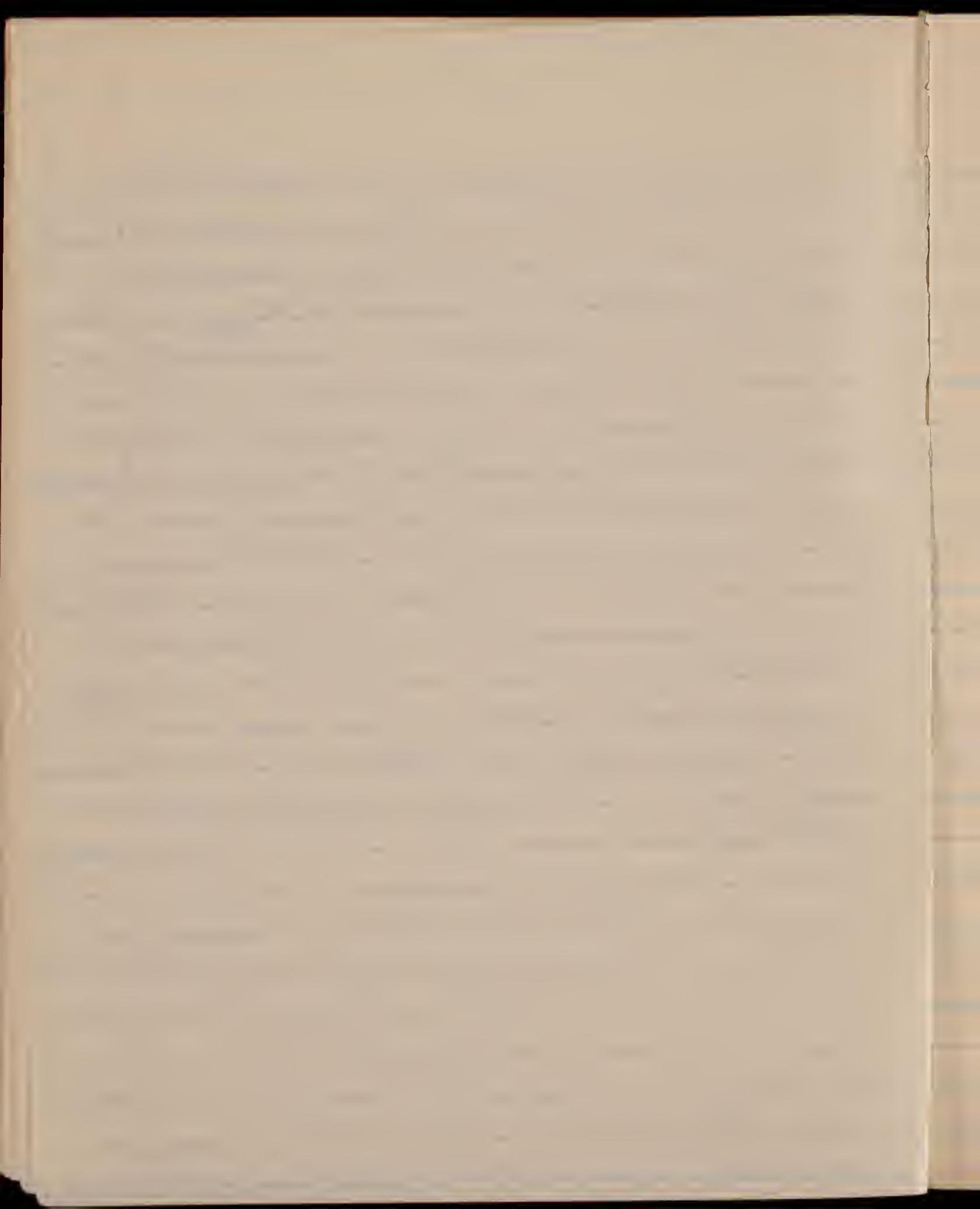
It could be called the style of Christian life of a community which according to the Decree on Ecumenism <sup>(art. 15, 16, 17)</sup> is to be found in the particularities of worship, of canon law, of asceticism and monasticism and also in the particular theological system. (Abbott,



Document of Vatican II p. 374 footnote 6).

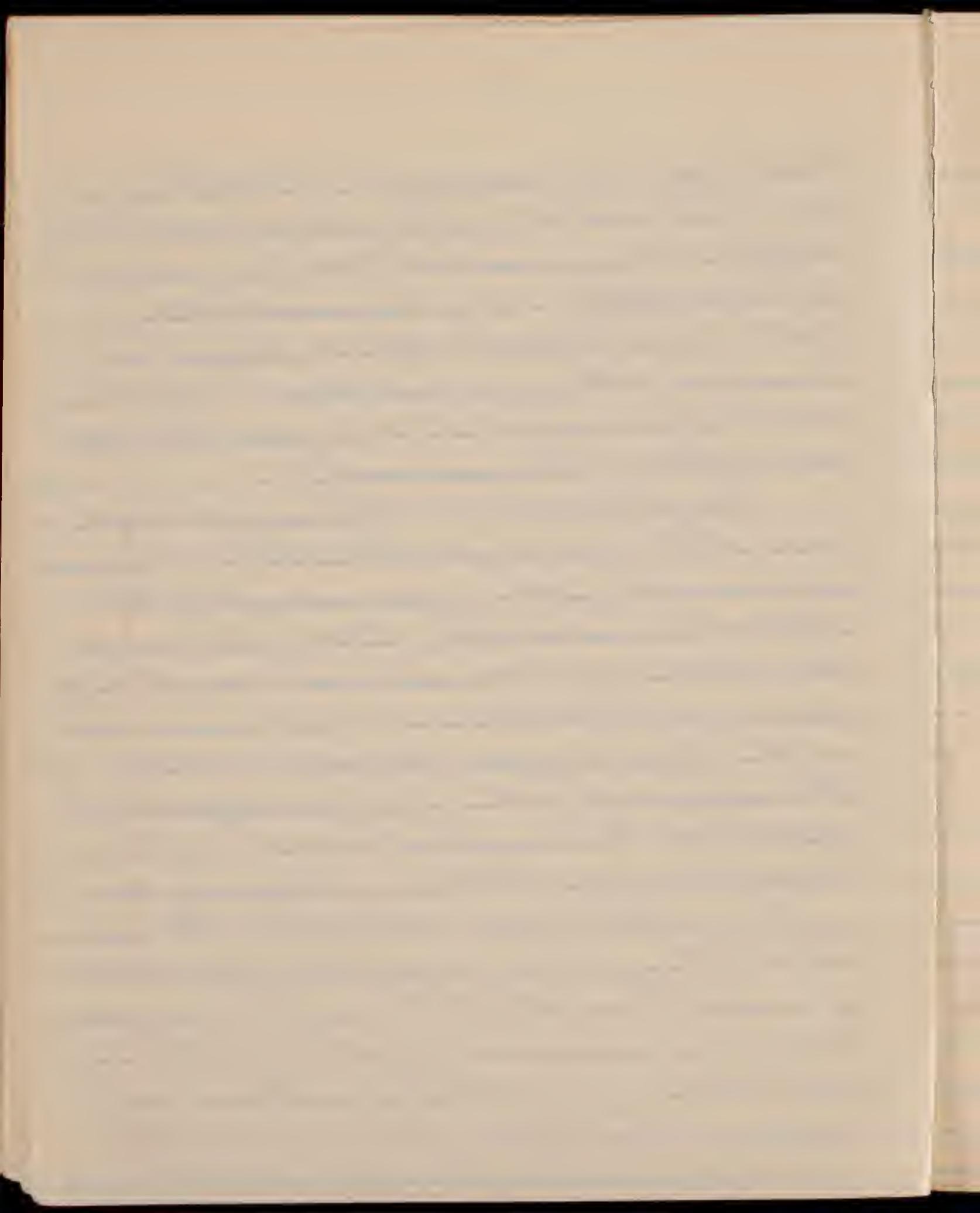
The Malankara Syrian Catholic Church is one such denomination of the Christian Church in India, with its own liturgy, customs, traditions and structure. Historically, it is a particular Church which takes root from the seed of faith sown by the Apostle Thomas, survived the vicissitudes of history, inherited one of the most ancient liturgies, came to full communion with the Catholic Church and remains as a distinct individual Church with all its prerogatives and obligations. The object of this paper is to trace the history of this denomination or Rite which is a distinct branch of the Catholic Church in India, with its own hierarchy and ecclesiastical character. In order to understand this history, it is necessary to explain the significance of rites in the Church which are based on different ways of celebrating the Holy Eucharist.

From the earliest times there have been diverse rites by which the one and same Eucharist is celebrated. Though the essential rite is always the same and is simply a repetition of the action of Christ at the



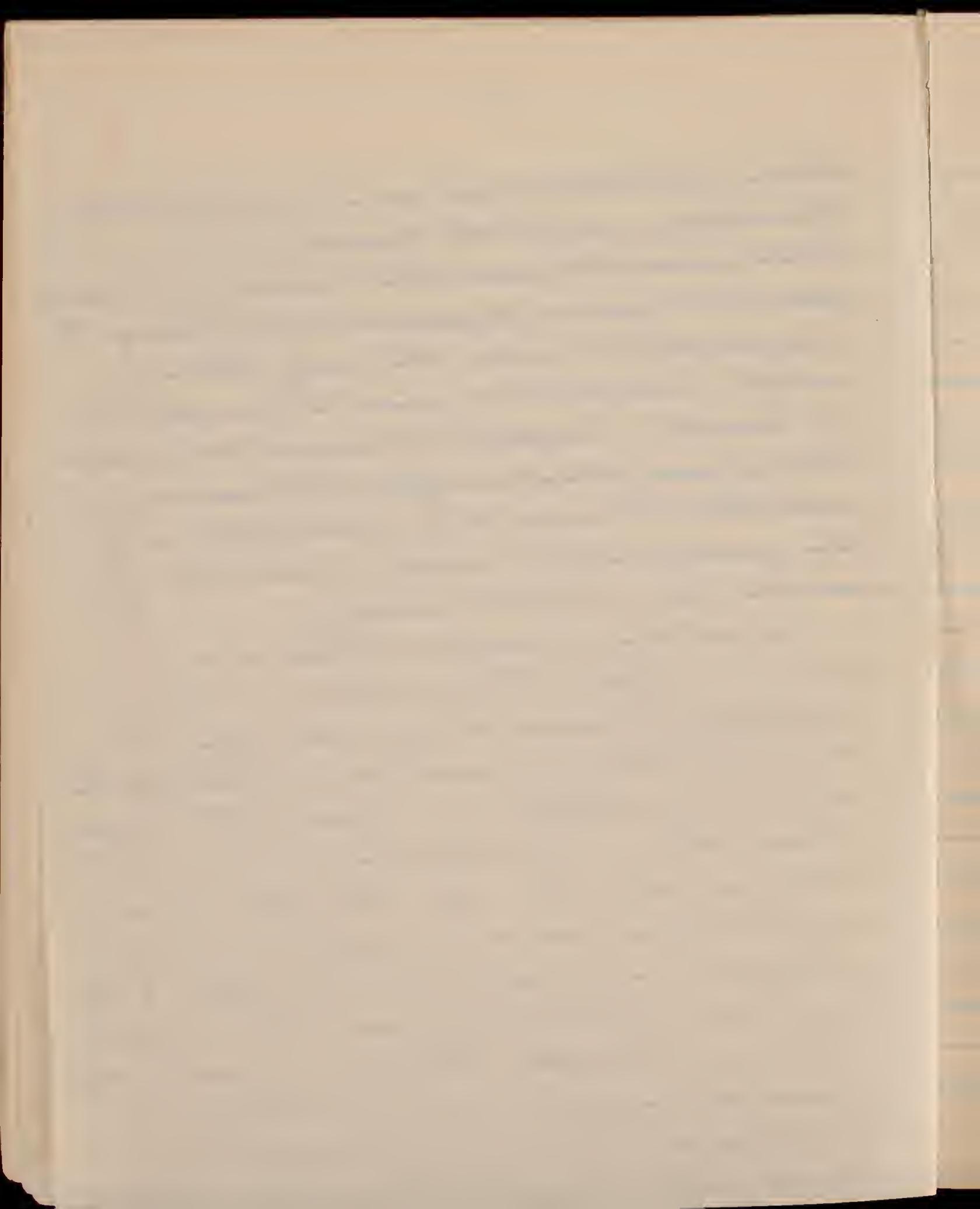
Last Supper, the language in which it is expressed and the ritual which accompanies it have always varied. Thus there are in the Church today many different rites: Latin, Greek, Russian, Syrian, Egyptian, Armenian, Ethiopian, and others, all of which go back to the early tradition of the Church and witness to her universality.

The first rite of the Offering of the Eucharist was that which was celebrated in the Church of Jerusalem, following the example of Our Lord at the Last Supper. It was known as the 'Breaking of the Bread' (Acts. ii, 42, 46), but later came to be known as the Eucharist or Thanksgiving, from the solemn prayer of Thanksgiving within which the offering takes place. The essential ritual action always remains the same, following the action of Christ, when he took bread and wine, blessed them and said the words of institution, broke the bread and gave them to his disciples. At first this rite was joined to a common meal as at the Last Supper, but very soon it was separated and a preliminary service was introduced.



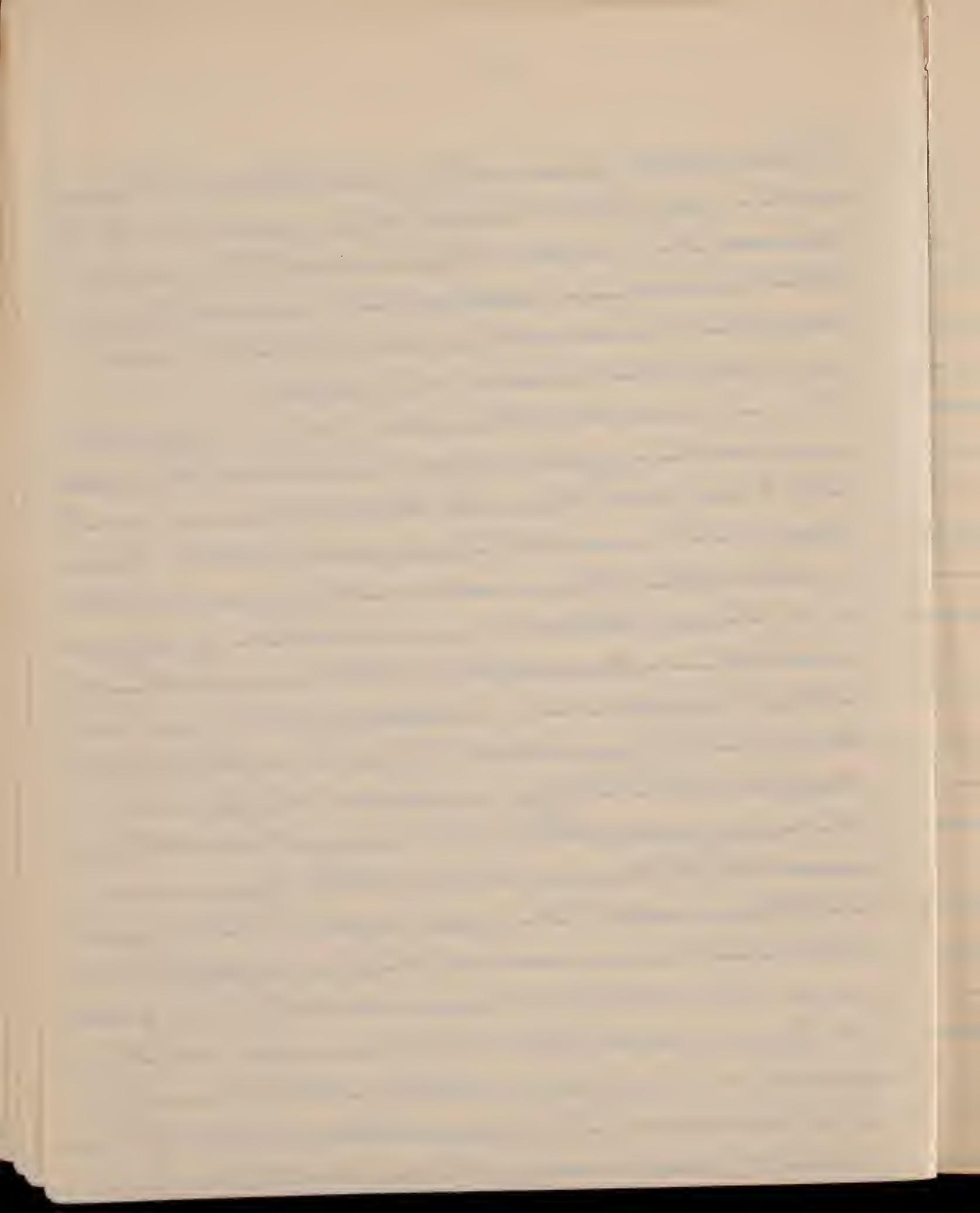
This was based on the service of the Jewish Synagogue, which the Apostles were accustomed to attend. It consisted of reading from the Scriptures, together with Psalms and prayers and a sermon. The early Church adopted this service, gradually adding the Christian Scriptures of the New Testament to the Jewish Scriptures of the Old Testament and this has remained the structure of the first part of the Eucharistic liturgy in all rites to the present day.

According to ancient tradition, the rite of Antioch, which is known as the Liturgy of St. James, is none other than the original rite of Jerusalem, as it ~~is~~ <sup>was</sup> celebrated by James the brother of the Lord, in the Church at Jerusalem. It is now held that the Rite as it now stands is not older than the 4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> century, but its principal elements go back to very early, if not apostolic, times and it is certainly one of the most venerable rites in the Church. Though the original liturgy of Jerusalem was in Aramaic, which was spoken by Our Lord and the Apostles, in Antioch, it was celebrated in Greek.,



as in all the great cities of the Roman Empire, including Rome itself. But when the faith spread into the country districts, it was translated into ~~Arma~~ Aramaic or Syriac, as it came to be called, as the Roman Rite was later translated into Latin.

In course of time the Syrian Church with its liturgy in Syriac spread <sup>all</sup> over ~~all~~ the East from Syria to Mesopotamia and Persia, and even to China and India. The centre of this Church was not only in Antioch but also at Edessa on the borders of Syria and it was there, that a flourishing Church school of Christian learning grew up in the 4<sup>th</sup> century with St. Ephrem as its great doctor. The liturgy of Edessa differed in many respects from that of Antioch and came to be known as the East Syrian or Chaldean rite. The whole Syrian liturgical tradition was enriched by St. Ephrem and his successors with an abundance of hymns and spiritual songs, and remains one of the richest sources of poetry in the Christian Church. The Syrian Church had a very strong ascetic



tradition and soon became a centre of monastic life with its hermits and monks who rivalled those of Egypt in the rigour of their asceticism and the depth of their spiritual life. It was in the monasteries that the liturgy was largely developed and the monastic ideal of Christian perfection set its mark on the whole Syrian liturgy. It had also its army of martyrs, especially during the persecution of the Church in Persia in the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> centuries, when great multitudes were slain for their faith. Thus the Syrian Church acquired a calendar of martyrs and saints of its own, which gave it a distinctive character. At the same time, being Semitic in its language and culture, it was in close contact with the world of the Bible and venerated the Patriarchs and Prophets of the Old Testament as its fathers in the faith as well as the Apostles in the New Testament; and above all, Mary, the Mother of God, for whom it had its own deep and poetic devotion.

With all this wealth of liturgical, doctrinal and spiritual life, the Syrian

Jacob Bourdono, known as Bardaeus, was chiefly responsible for the organization of the West Syrian Liturgy. It was after him that the Church of Antioch came to be known as "Jacobite"; it was under him that the Liturgy was translated from Greek to Syriac and the present Liturgy, as practised in the Malankara Church, came into being. "But, at the same time, this Liturgy drew largely on the traditions and customs of the Syriac speaking East Syrian Church, together with the hymns and chants of St. Ephrem and his successors. This Liturgy continued to grow from the 7<sup>th</sup> to the 12<sup>th</sup> century, borrowing not only from the East Syrian Liturgy, but also, through Jerusalem, from the Byzantine tradition. Thus, here gradually grew up, a Liturgy of incomparable splendour and beauty, richer in its hymnody ~~and~~ not only than the Latin but also than the Greek".

"The Oriental Orthodox Churches are sometimes wrongly called 'Monophysite', based on the Western misunderstanding that these Churches believe only in one divine nature of the Incarnate Lord Jesus. They are also misnamed 'Jacobite', again on the misconception that they were started by Jacob Bardaeus (c 500-575)

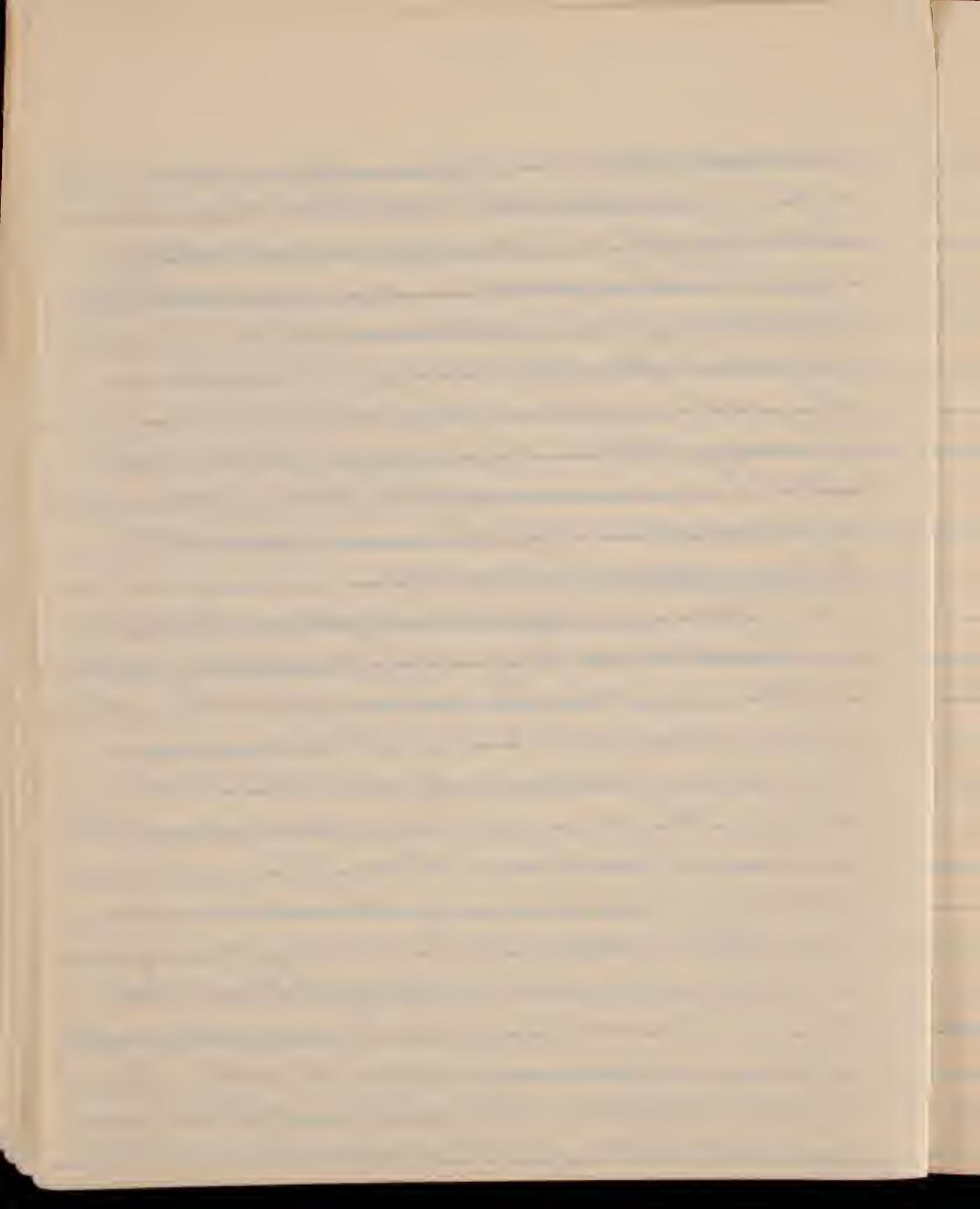
Church possessed a spirit of missionary enterprise which carried it right across Asia to China and India and made it at one time the most widely extended Church in Christendom. However, this flourishing Church, so rich in all the best traditions of the Christian faith, was for the most part separated from the communion of the world-wide Church in the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> centuries, over the question of the relation between the divine and human natures in Christ. The East Syrian Church, emphasizing the reality of the human nature in Christ, came to be associated with the doctrine of Nestorius, which was condemned at the Council of Ephesus in 431 A.D.; while the West Syrian Church, emphasizing the place of the divine nature, was associated with the doctrine of the Monophysites, which held that there was only 'one nature' in Christ, and was condemned at the Council of Chalcedon in 451 A.D. This Church was organized by a certain Jacob Bourdono, <sup>known as Bardaisan</sup> in the 6<sup>th</sup> century, and hence became known as

"It is now generally recognized that these divisions were ~~not~~ due not so much to differences in theology, which were largely verbal, as to national & cultural differences, which tragically separated the Churches of Asia & Africa from Byzantium with its Gk cultured imperialism."

'It is significant that it was after the separation from 'Orthodoxy' that the Syrian Church began to spread right across Asia to develop an authentic oriental Christianity. Its value today is that it remains as the finest example of a Christian cultural expression which is neither Latin nor Greek, but belongs to the ancient semitic world of the Middle East.'

Jacobite. It is now generally recognized that the questions which divided these Churches were largely matters of terminology and that their doctrine was essentially orthodox for the most part. Thus, though divided from the rest of Christendom, they retained their rich inheritance of liturgy, doctrine and spiritual life, which remains one of the great treasures of Christian tradition. (The Eastern Rites in India .pp. 2-6).

According to a very strong tradition the Gospel was originally preached in India by Thomas, one of the twelve Apostles, who came to India in 52 A. D. The earliest Christian community of India has always been known as the Mar Thoma (St. Thomas) Christians. It is believed that Thomas made many Christians from the noble castes of the country and from the Jews who had colonized Malabar, the south west tip of the Indian peninsula, before the beginning of the Christian Era. Since the Syriac language at that time was the lingua franca throughout the



East and since there was a Jewish colony in Malabar that spoke that language, it is further believed that the Malabar Church had a Syriac beginning with regard to its rite and liturgy. (Fr. Placid, The Syrian Church in Malabar, pp 3-4). The Syrian Church in India claims that Thomas established seven churches in the present state of Kerala, before he went to Madras on the southeast coast, where he was martyred and lies buried in St. Thomas Cathedral, Mylapore. It is certain that the Church was established in Kerala at a very early date, and it appears in the 6<sup>th</sup> century already as a Syrian Church under the jurisdiction of the Patriarch of Seleucia-Ctesiphon in Mesopotamia, from whom it received its bishops. Thus the Chaldean (East Syrian) rite was used by all Christians in Kerala until the 17<sup>th</sup> century (ibid.)

In the 16<sup>th</sup> century the Syrians came in contact with the Portuguese, who were the first European colonisers in India. The zealous Portuguese and the Syrians

The Synod was a high-handed and unscrupulous  
action for the complete Romanization of the  
Malankara Church. (Fr. O. C. Kurukose Cor Episcopi  
in E. C. N. L. 21 Autumn, B. p. 19)

In 1930, the Orthodox Bishop Mar Ivanios  
became reconciled with Rome and the Catholic  
Syro-Malankara Church was formed with another  
Bishop and a few followers, following the same  
liturgical rites & customs as in the Malankara Church.  
So both Catholics & Orthodox are following the same  
West Syrian Liturgy in Kerala, while the Malankara  
Church maintains its separate, <sup>independent</sup> identity & character.

at first behaved towards each other as brethren in faith. From the very beginning of their settlement in Malabar, the Portuguese began missionary activities mainly along the east and west coasts <sup>of India</sup>. They, especially Francis Xavier, converted a good number of Hindus and strongly established the Latin Church in Malabar. But they soon began a slow process of latinization of the Syrians which was strongly resented by the latter. They also attempted to bring the Syrian Church of India under their jurisdiction. The Jesuit Archbishop Menezes aggravated the situation by convening the Synod of Diamper (1599) where he prevailed upon the Syrians to anathematize their Patriarch as a schismatic and a heretic. Matters came to a head with rumours that the Portuguese had drowned Bishop Athattalla sent by the Patriarch of Babylon, upon which the enraged Syrians assembled near the Coonen (= bent) Cross at Mattanchery near Cochin on January 3, 1653, and, holding a rope tied to the Cross, swore

It was during the period from 1663 to 1795, that the Indian Christians, fearing all three Western powers (Portuguese, Dutch and British), sought an alliance with the Syrian Church. The Dutch, who were fighting the Portuguese in the Indian sub-continent, helped to bring the Syrians to India.

"It was during the British colonial period that there was another brutal incursion into the autonomy of the Church in India. In 1875, little more than a 100 yrs ago, the Syrian Patriarch Peter III came with the letters of authority from the British, having paid a visit to Queen Victoria in England before coming to India. He dominated the young Indian Metropolitan (below 40 yrs of age) who was scared of the British, and forcefully, in an action very similar to that of Portuguese Abp Menezes, at the Synod of Diamper in 1599, drove the non-Roman Christians into a Syrian Obedience <sup>at the Charles Melanthurumby Synod</sup> in the year 1876. He wanted all Churches here to execute bonds, pledging age-long obedience to him. Very few Churches did that, some of the descendants of those who did, are in the forefront of the new revolt which the Syrians have engineered since 1970"

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They would no longer obey the <sup>Paulists,</sup> ~~Portuguese~~,  
i.e. the Jesuits. Thus they broke away  
from the Portuguese ecclesiastical  
authorities who had high-handedly  
interfered with their Syrian liturgy,  
customs and autonomous character.

Eventually, however, the greater  
number of Syrian Christians returned  
to communion with ~~the~~ Rome with a  
Latinized liturgy (forming what is  
now known as the Syro-Malabar Church  
or Rite), but a large number remained  
1665 who placed themselves under the  
Patriarch of Antioch and thus became  
Monophysites or 'Jacobites' at least in  
name, and adopted the rite of Antioch,  
or the West Syrian liturgy. From this  
time they have been known as 'Puthenkootu-  
kar' or new party while the Catholic  
Syrians retained the name of 'Pazhayakootu-  
kar' or old party. From the Jacobites  
a splinter group became independent  
in the 18th century under the name of  
Thozhuyoor or Anjeor Syrians or the  
Independent Syrian Church of Malabar.

"The title and rank of Catholicos developed outside the Roman Empire, and is much more ancient than the title of Patriarch in the Christian Church. The title & rank of Patriarch developed first in the Roman Empire around the 4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> centuries and was later copied elsewhere. There were three Catholicates <sup>in the</sup> early centuries before the title Patriarch came to be recognized in the 5<sup>th</sup> century." (East, Armenia & Georgia)

In 1912, The Catholicos of the East, which had become defunct in Persia, took rebirth in India. In a ceremony at which the Syrian Patriarch of Antioch, Moran Mar Abdel Meskha, officiated, an Indian Catholicos was set up by the Indian Church. Thus the Indians reasserted their autonomy and got the ancient Catholicate of the East, associated with the name of St. Thomas the Apostle, established in India. Till 1958, a group of Indians resisted submitting to the autosephalous authority of the Catholicos, preferring to owe allegiance to some of the bishops in India, who were obedient to the Syrian Patriarch.

The Supreme Court of India, in 1958, recognised the validity of the Catholicate in India. After this judgment, the Syrian Patriarch also recognised the full authority of the Catholicos in India. The Church functions harmoniously as per the Constitution of the Malankara Church.

whom <sup>date</sup>

(The head of his small denomination, Metropolitan Poulosse Mar Philoxinos <sup>in 1977</sup> was recently received into the Malankara Syrian Catholic Church.) Again in the 19th century some Jacobite Syrians became Protestants of the Church Missionary Society and some others the Reformed Syrians or Marthomites. The remaining Jacobites again in the 20th century were divided into the Patriarch's (Bava) Party and the Bishop's (Metran) Party which latter elected a Catholicos and became autonomous, adopting the name of the Syrian Orthodox (now known as the Indian Orthodox) Church. From 1975 onwards these two parties have <sup>each</sup> a Catholicos of its own at Meovatu-puzha and Kottayam respectively and have some 30 bishops in India and <sup>even</sup> abroad.

The bifurcation of the Jacobite Church ~~led to~~ <sup>followed</sup> a series of litigations over the temporalities of the Church. The first of these known as the 'Vattipana Case' was over the interest of an investment of about \$1000 in the Bank for ~~the~~ welfare activities

by the priesthood of the people of God; by the threefold office of the hierarchy; by the apostolate of the laity; each of these is considered in turn, not only in the abstract, but with a view to the consequences which the fact of communion has on the state of life of those who belong to each category.

The third section of this study considers what is meant by communion and how communion is expressed. This discussion leads to an awareness of the contribution which the perceptions of other Christian bodies have to make to the question.

At a time when all denominations are eager to achieve unity, it is essential to think deeply about the nature of the Church and of unity itself. Fr. Hamer, a former student of Yves Congar, has written a work of compelling importance in the development of our thinking in the next decades, since it embodies so much of the ecclesiology expressed by Vat. Council II  
(from the dust cover)

among the Syrian Christians. It was settled in favour of the Bishop's Party in 1928. This was followed by another sensational suit in the civil courts known as 'Samudaya case' which was also decided in favour of the Catholicos (Bishop's) Party in 1958. However, another lawsuit called the 'Church case' erupted in 1973 with the Orthodox Party as plaintiff and the Patriarch's Party as defendant and was settled in 1980 in favour of the latter. It is interesting that Dr. Poulos Njar Gregorios, Metropolitan of the Syrian Orthodox Church, admits that "his Church has a long history of schisms and litigations and is even now having a major infight" and again "that all the money and energy of the Syrian Orthodox Church for half a century was wasted in his litigation which was in direct contravention of the words of the Apostle Paul (I Cor. vi, 1 ff)" (The Indian Orthodox Church p 2). It is even more significant that the Hindu Chief Justice in his judgment pointed out that lasting peace between the parties

Jerome Hamer: The Church is a Communion  
(Sheed & Ward, New York 1964)

The unity of the Church, the heart of ecumenical concern, does not lie simply in the people who belong to it. This book is an attempt to answer the question: 'What is the principle of the Church's unity' and to arrive at an understanding of the nature of the Church at its most profound level.

This is, therefore, a theological investigation. The author begins with an historical survey of the emergence of the term 'mystical body' as descriptive of the Church, especially in the years between the I Vat. Council & the encyclical Mystici Corporis.

He turns, then, to an examination of the biblical images & themes suggestive of the unity of the Church: Church, People, Body, Kingdom. From this emerges the concept of unity, which St. Paul had, and which was the working principle of the Church in the early centuries. There follows a discussion of the theology of St. Thomas on this point, which leads to a consideration of the eucharist as productive of unity.

By his means Fr. Hamer arrives at his definition of the Church: the Church is a Communion. ← This communion is generated by various causes.

could be brought about only by a reconciliation based on the Gospel!

Ever since the schism of 1653, the Jacobites governed by indigenous prelates were making tentative approaches to Rome, but they were thwarted by the unhelpful attitude of the Congregation of the Propaganda Fide and the Portuguese Padroado. In 1926 a Jacobite Episcopal Synod of the Bishops Party which met at Parumala near Kottayam empowered one of their bishops Mar Ivanios of Bethany to enter into negotiations with Rome to effect a reunion with the Catholic Church. Mar Ivanios "had a remarkably impressive ascetic personality and was highly educated by the standards of that time, having a Master's degree from the Madras University and a divinity degree from Serampore College". (ibid. p. 38) As Poulos Mar Gregorios remarks, "he had probably reason to feel unhappy in the (Indian) Orthodox Church where the disputes between the Patriarch's Party and the Catholicos Party were going from bad to worse"

can turn toward each other and in the light of  
faith perform a mutual & corporate act of ecclesial  
recognition. This is the Christian unity we seek:  
churches acknowledging each other as valid  
articulations of what it means to be the Church of Jesus Christ.  
Then the bond of communio can be extended between  
the bodies which have recognized in each other  
a total complex of genuinely Christian belief,  
worship, & polity. With full communio established,  
no further assimilation or organizational merger  
need be sought.

The image of the ancient Church that Herlihy  
describes should keep us from conceiving ecumenism  
on a political model. The issues are not  
diplomacy, negotiation & compromise. These  
must give way to realities of the sacramental sphere.  
For mutual ecclesial recognition is but the prelude  
to forging the bond of communio through unrestricted  
celebration of common Eucharists. Ultimately  
it is the eucharistic body of Christ that will make  
us into one body of Christ. This, however, will not  
be a single uniform & centralized organization;  
but a rich plurality of churches in communion  
with each other.

(From the Introduction by Jared Weeks S.J.)

A good many priests and lay people of the Jacobite (Orthodox) Church shared his unhappiness which prompted them to leave their infight-ridden Church. Among them was the writer's own father, the late Rev. C. K. Mathai (Changarampallil) of Anchel, who joined the Roman Catholic Church in the Latin Diocese of Quilon in January 1930. A zealous Carmelite missionary bishop, Mgr. Aloysius Benziger, who was the Bishop of the above diocese at the time, paved the way for the historic reunion of Mar Ivanios, Metropolitan of Bethany, Bishop Mar Theophilos and three others (a priest, a ~~deacon~~ <sup>deacon</sup> and a layman) on 20 September 1930, to be followed by a large scale movement of Syrian Christians, including their bishops and priests, into the Catholic Church. Rome accepted the condition of the reuniting <sup>prefates</sup> ~~bishops~~. But the ancient and venerable tradition of the Malankara Church should be kept intact. This reunion movement gained unprecedented momentum and hence Pope Pius XI, by the Apostolic Constitution 'Christo Pastorum Principi' established

united in faith & in the possibility of participation in the same Eucharist.

For our own day, the critical insight is that the separated bodies or denominations in both the East and the West are in this sense churches or even networks of churches linked by communio with each other. This is obvious in the case of the Orthodox & the Anglican-Episcopal Churches. The latter even style themselves as "the Anglican Communion".

The great gain afforded by the ecclesiology of communio becomes apparent when we ask what is the goal of Christian ecumenical efforts. Ecumenists are not striving for the eventual transfer of masses of Christians to some system of doctrine, worship, and Church polity - other than their own. The goal, rather, is the extension of bonds of communio between these Churches now existing as separated communities of faith & worship.

Sensitivity towards one's separated Christian brethren is only a beginning. The main challenge is that of total ecclesial growth. Developments must take place in all aspects of our church life, in all churches. The commitment to ecumenism means striving towards the day on which churches

the "Syro-Malankara" Hierarchy in 1932 and created the Archdiocese of Trivandrum and the suffragan diocese of Tiruvalla. The Syro-Malankara Province extended from the river Ponnani in the north of Kerala to Kanyakumari (Cape Comorin) in the south. In 1958 it was further extended to the north and brought in the rest of Kerala and a few civil districts of Tamilnadu and Karnataka which were added to the diocese of Tiruvalla. This diocese was bifurcated in 1978 and the Diocese of Bathery formed for the northern regions.

Mar Ivanios passed away in 1953 and was succeeded by the present Archbishop Benedict Mar Gregorios who presides over the Syro-Malankara Province of Trivandrum consisting of three dioceses and five bishops. The Golden Jubilee of the Reunion Movement of the Malankara Church was celebrated at Kottayam in 1980 when Wladyslaw Cardinal Rubin, Prefect of the S. Congregation for the Oriental Churches, presided as papal legate. Other eminent participants included Patriarch Maximos Hakim of

sacramentally focused local churches bound together ultimately by the mutual openness of their eucharistic celebrations.

In a number of key passages, II Vatican Council used the language of communio in speaking of Church membership (LG 14), the episcopal college (21-23), & the eminent role of the local church (26). Thus, the theme of sacramental-eclesial communio is one of the key conceptions of the recent ecclesiological movement of Catholicism.

The previous (pre-Vatican II) juridical emphasis and degree of uniformity made impossible any rapprochement with the Orthodox Churches of the East and cut off the possibility of dialogue with the separated churches of the Protestant West. Herthring's essay on communio shows how the historical investigation of the early Church yielded a counterpoise to these prevailing conceptions of pre-Vatican II Catholic ecclesiology.

### Communio & Ecumenism.

The image of the ancient Church can serve to clarify the goal of ecumenical activity. Herthring describes the ancient plurality of distinct local churches, each one of which was a genuine assembly of Christians

Antioch and Mother Teresa is <sup>Madras (Madison)</sup>

The Malankara Syrian Catholic Church which began its new existence with the reunion of 5 persons 55 years ago has today a membership of 275,000 people spread mainly over the States of Kerala, Tamilnadu and Karnataka in South India. There ~~are~~ <sup>are</sup> 400 <sup>7 bishops</sup> ordained priests, of whom about 100 are members of religious orders. The religious Brothers number 80 and Sisters 900. A separate Theological Seminary was opened recently in Trivandrum where already a First Grade Arts and Science College (up to the postgraduate level) and a College of Education have already been founded. There are altogether 800 parishes and mission stations spread through the three dioceses.

One of the far-sighted moves of Mar Ivanios, the founder of the Reunion Movement of the Malankara Syrian Church, was the carrying of the message of the Gospel to the predominantly Nadar (Caste) communities south of Trivandrum. The mission has been quite successful, as is evidenced

Ludwig Hertling, Communion, Church + Papacy in Early Christianity (Loyola University Press, Chicago 1972)

- 1) The first half of the essay describes the evidence found in inscriptions & letters and draws out what is implicit in a series of early Christian customs & stories. This material helps sharpen our gaze for the plurality of local churches, with each local church having a concrete sacramental unity (communio) through the Eucharist and through the person of its bishop. The second half expands the peculiar notion of pastoral authority implied in communio and shows how the bishop of the local Church of Rome served as the focal point of the network of churches linked together in the Catholic, or universal, communio.

Hertling has made a seminal contribution to the development of ecclesiology in our time. Catholic theologians, such as Yves Congar, M.-J. Le Guillou, Jerome Hamer, & Joseph Ratzinger, have taken up the theme of communio as a central motive for understanding the nature & structure of the Church. They have shown that the great issues of Christian unity, ministry, authority & collegiality can be set in proper light only when they are related to the fundamental reality of the Church as a network of

by the large numbers of Nadar Catholics in the Archdiocese of Trivandrum, which has two proto-presbyteral (forane) districts with nearly 60 mission stations exclusively for them. During the Golden Jubilee celebrations of the Reunion Movement at Kottayam in 1980, a priest of his community was raised to the episcopate in the person of Lawrence Mar Ephraem, who has been nominated Auxiliary to the Archbishop of Trivandrum. (This event sets a precedent in the <sup>ethnically conscious</sup> Syrian Churches in India). There are many vocations to the priesthood and the religious orders from this community (which is on the way to having <sup>another</sup> diocese south of Trivandrum <sup>(The diocese of Marikandayam in the south was created by the apostolic Bull dated 16th December 1996)</sup>). Although the Malankara Catholic Church is a particular <sup>(Oriental)</sup> Church in communion with <sup>the See of</sup> Rome, it lacks the Patriarchal system of <sup>government</sup> administration prevalent in the Eastern Churches. It therefore feels legitimately entitled to at least a Catholicos as its <sup>primate</sup> ~~head~~, as in the Malankara Orthodox Church. In this context it is going ahead with plans for convening a

Visiting Trivandrum, the centre of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church, the pope spoke at a prayer service <sup>on the beach</sup>, Feb. 8 and once again called for Church unity.

"On the road from the airport I have been able to visit the Cathedral of St. Joseph and the Cathedral of St. Mary. These visits have a particular symbolism he ~~said~~ <sup>noted</sup>. "They express the fullness of ecclesial communion and peace between us: between the successor of Peter and your local churches, the Latin Diocese of Trivandrum and the Syro-Malankara Metropolitan See of Trivandrum --- May we experience deep joy in our solidarity as disciples of Our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ".  
(Oregins Feb. 20, 1986 Vol 15, No. 36 p. 590 margin)

[provincial Synod (in accordance with Canons 340-351) with a view to discovering the means for reinforcing its mission and life based on its ecclesial traditions and spiritual heritage. The proposed Synod will hopefully review the interior life, missionary activity and administrative affairs of the Church. It may also have to remedy the present disabilities of the Church and correct wrong trends which may possibly have crept into the Church against its heritage and traditions.]

The Oriental <sup>Catholic</sup> Churches <sup>in India</sup> are generally reacting against certain unnatural restrictions imposed upon them by the predominantly Latin-rite Catholic Bishops' Conference of India. Whereas the Latin Church has unrestricted rights jurisdiction all over the country, their Syrian counterparts have been "obstructed from exercising their fundamental right and obligation for evangelization --- on account of the lack of provision for evangelization following one's own ecclesial tradition

Pope John Paul's 10-day visit to India included a two-day swing through the southern Indian state of Kerala, the cradle of Indian Christianity, whose 4 million Catholics trace their roots to St. Thomas the Apostle.

In Kerala, where St. Thomas is believed to have landed in 52 A.D., the Catholic Church has three branches. The Pope was careful to visit churches of each rite so that no one would feel slighted.

The Latin rite, the youngest of the three branches, arrived with European missionaries in the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

A second branch, the Syro-Malabar Catholics, was "Latinized" and only recently has had its own liturgy, with its elements of Eastern rites, approved.

The third branch, the Syro-Malankara Catholics, rejected Latinization during the European missionary thrust, but returned to union with Rome in 1930.

Relations between the Latin- and Eastern-rite bishops have been strained by jurisdictional issues in recent years. At a Feb. 7 Mass attended by leaders of all three rites, the pope said the Church needs to restore its unity "where it has been weakened or tarnished".

←

Outline:

Ecumenical Strategies  
of  
the Malankara Syrian Catholic Church

\* We live in an age of pluralism - both within individual religions and in relation to other faiths. In this pluralistic society there is <sup>a</sup> widespread and sincere desire for mutual understanding coupled with a real thirst for universality. The Christian ecumenical movement is a prime example of this general trend, and an important one for shaping the future. A similar movement can be found in contemporary Hinduism. This ecumenical movement detectable within different religions is now in the process of being widened and deepened into an "ecumenical ecumenism" between religions as well. (R. Panikkar).

With the resurgence of ecclesial particularism, ecumenism needs to be interpreted in a new way that does not pose a direct threat to the religious identity of the groups which take part in it. In relation to the actual religious situation, the proximate goal of ecumenism should be redefined as "the achievement of a hetero-

"The wider ecumenism or the encounter betw. diff. relig. traditions"  
or "ecumenism of the world religions" (Hans Küng)

generous community of witnessing dialogue" for heterogeneous communities the model might be friendship rather than the family; new value is the element of tension or of challenges. The existence of multiple autonomous traditions (Catholic, Protestant, Orthodox) has been, providentially, a means of preserving pluralism. (A. Dulles - The Resilient Church)

Pluralism is already very great in some of the Protestant Churches, but it has been slow to assert itself in Roman Catholicism. The decentralization of the future will involve a certain measure of de-Romanization. The Catholic Church in the name of its "catholicity" must at all costs avoid falling into a sectarian mentality. (Thus there is no conflict in being Catholic and ecumenical). The Church is a <sup>union or</sup> communion of men <sup>people</sup> with one another through the grace of Christ. Although this communion manifests itself in sacramental and juridical structures, at the heart of the Church, one finds mystery.

The notion of the Church as community has appealed to many modern theologians  
 ← (cf. Dietrich Bonhoeffer: The Communion of Saints)

B. C. Butler The Church and Unity (Geoffrey Chapman London, 1979)

Communion (from Gk *koinonia* = sharing) is a system of personal relations built upon and flowing from common possession or common experience, and in potency to become interpersonal relationship. It has two meanings:

- 1) a relation or relations between persons, established through shared 'possessions', shared experiences or shared goals and hopes;
- 2) a community arising out of such established relations. (p. 36)

The Church - if it is a communion - is embodied not only in the 'universal' communion of the faithful the world over and down the ages, but also in each local community that remains in 'communion' with the universal Church (p. 52).

At its heart, religion - - is a communion with God which creates and depends on communion with one's fellow men (60).

Christianity is a religion rooted in humanity & the conditions of humanity, in historical culture, and in that physical <sup>world</sup> ~~culture~~ in which men live out their lives and from which they draw substance and sustenance. The Christian religion is as concrete as it is <sup>universal</sup> (67)

also Jérôme Hamer: The Church is a Communion (Sheed & Ward New York - 1962)

The two models of Body of Christ and People of God both illuminate from different angles the notion of the Church as communion or community. This type of ecclesiology has a better basis in the biblical notion of communion (*koinonia*). The approach is ecumenically very fruitful and has an excellent foundation in the Catholic tradition. Short of full reunion there may be many possibilities of mutual recognition, doctrinal accord, joint worship and practical cooperation among the different denominational traditions. (Dalles - models of the Church)

The typos model of union (accepting the idea of typological diversity within a single ecclesial allegiance) is most suited to the Eastern Churches. If a pluralistic community (which maintains diversity in communion and communion in diversity) is a goal of the Church, it is easy to see how ecumenism, from posing a threat, can be a singularly valuable resource. It can help the Churches to introduce into their own ranks a more creative diversity. "Today the only worthwhile unity will be one which gathers up all the enriching diversity of the varying Christian traditions" (Macquarrie)

Dalles, The Catholicity of the Church (Clarendon Press, Oxford) 1985

In a sermon delivered in Cambridge, England, on 18 January 1970, Card. Jan Willebrand, President of S.P.U.C., spoke of the ecumenical importance of the principle that the Catholic Church must embody diversity as well as unity, and can therefore comprise distinct ecclesial types, which he called by the Gk term, typoi. 'Where there is a long coherent tradition, commanding men's love & loyalty, creating & sustaining a harmonious & organic whole of complementary elements, each of which supports & strengthens the other, you have the reality of a typos. A typos, he went on to say, is ordinarily specified by the presence of four elements: a characteristic theological approach, a characteristic liturgical expression, a characteristic canonical discipline.

(See Document on Anglican/R.C. Relations (Washington D.C., U.S.C.C., 1972) p. 39.)

Card. Willebrand's evidently intended to suggest that Anglicanism contains many of the <sup>elements</sup> of a legitimate typos, and in the event of a reunion with Rome it might be able to preserve the essentials of its own heritage. (p. 79).

*entire*

The whole Orient, Christian as well as non-Christian, has a deep unity in culture and traditions and religious outlook. In history and tradition and the general approach to problems, the Oriental Churches and Indian religions have followed a common path.

The Oriental traditions of the St. Thomas Christians in India are neither an anomaly nor a monolith <sup>to be treated</sup> as a province of the Roman Church.

⊕ The Oriental Christians in India on their part have a special God-given responsibility to communicate to their fellow-Indians Christ's message of salvation proclaimed for all human beings (I B Chethumattom).

The 'Malankara Church' is that part <sup>commonly understood as</sup> of the ancient Thomas Christian Community that broke away from the Catholic communion in 1653 and placed itself under the Syrian Church of Antioch. This separated community has, in the course of history, been further divided into many independent groups such as Malankara Orthodox, Jacobite, Marthomite, Thozhiyoor, and (partly) C.S.I. Churches. All these churches share basically the same theological, liturgical and spiritual heritage.

Communal harmony and cordial relations existed between Christians and Hindus.

"Hindu in culture, Christian in faith and Syro-Oriental in worship" (Fr. Placid Podipara)

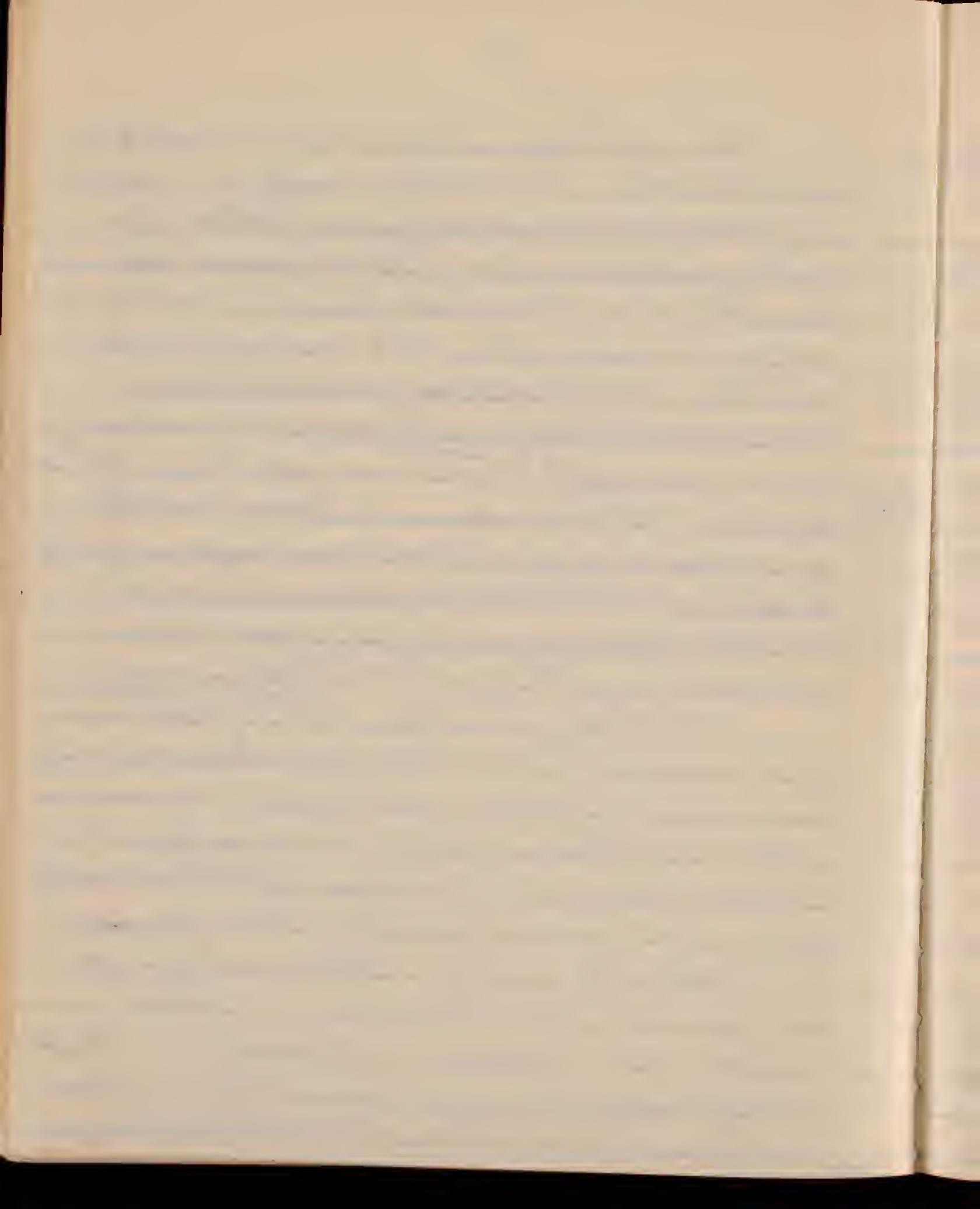
⊗ The emphasis on the apostolic antiquity of his Church is the re-affirmation of a sacred trust it has received for the universal Church, its unique ecclesial tradition

of the Syrian Church of Antioch, besides its indigenous character.

The Malankara (Syrian) Catholic Church ~~(a brief history)~~ is the Syrian community, reunited with the See of Rome in 1930. It is a particular Church which takes root from the seed of faith sown by the Apostle Thomas, survived the vicissitudes of history, inherited one of the most ancient liturgies, <sup>and</sup> came to full communion with the Catholic Church as a distinct individual Church with all its prerogatives and obligations. It ~~is~~ <sup>has to be</sup> seen as a denomination of the Christian Church in India with its own liturgy, customs, traditions and structure.

The word "rite" sometimes applied to the <sup>individual</sup> ~~particular~~ church means more than liturgical customs. It could be called the style of Christian life of a community which, according to the Decree on Ecumenism, is to be found in the particularities of worship, of canon law, of asceticism and monasticism and also in the particular theological system.

If the Coonen Cross oath of 1653 was a revolt against the Western Church's refusal to recognize the identity of the Malankara Church, the historic reunion of 1930 was, to a certain





Since the Church in India Seminar, Bangalore, 1959, ~~there were signs of the Latin Church in the Catholic Church in India (Latin & Oriental)~~ the Indian Church showed eagerness to snatch the opportunity provided by the <sup>dynamic principles of the</sup> Second Vatican Council and favourable pronouncements of the Popes to give shape to ~~an authentic Indian Church~~ <sup>an authentic Indian liturgy</sup>. However the ~~structures of the S.C. for Divine Worship (1975)~~ <sup>letter</sup> forbidding liturgical experiments and the use of the Indian anaphora has had a stifling effect on the Indianization movement enthusiastically launched <sup>by the so-called 'One Rite Movement'</sup> ~~after the Vatican Council~~. In the case of the ~~Syro-Malabar rite~~ <sup>Syro-Malabar rite</sup> Oriental Catholics there are other factors which act as obstacles to their growth into an Indian Church. One is the restriction put on their freedom to work in the whole of India as Oriental ~~Catholics~~ <sup>Christians</sup>, and the other, <sup>there was</sup> a tension within the community created by a polarization of views on the identity of their Church: The question how far the Indian Church is bound to retain or restore the Syrian character. (is applicable only to the Syro-Malabar Church) The Syro-Malankara Church having jealously preserved its West Syrian liturgy and many of the Antiochene traditions is in a more advantageous position to ~~act~~ <sup>act</sup> as a catalyst in the Indian ~~adoption~~ <sup>adoption</sup> ~~intermediary~~ <sup>intermediary</sup> context

a liturgy which provides a living link with the ante-Nicene Church and even the Apostolic Cell in Jerusalem and one which is also beautifully adapted for the Eucharistic devotion of Indian worshippers. But she should be something more than a "uniate" model which submits to the doctrinal and ecclesiological principles of another Church, in return for the permission to retain her own liturgical and canonical practices.

The liabilities of the Malankara Catholic Church are: 1) it lacks the patriarchal form of government prevalent in the Eastern Churches. It has therefore to strive towards obtaining at least a Catholicos or major archbishop as its common head. 2) it lacks a proper code of canon law and constitution of its own. Its present structure is no different from that of the Latin (Roman) Church. 3) it has not been <sup>able</sup> to evolve a theology and spirituality based on its ancient traditions nor ~~train~~ its clergy along the same lines. It is hoped that the opening of the Malankara Catholic Theological Seminary will remedy this disability to some extent.

Pope John Paul II, during his visit to India Feb. 8, had "a particular word of affection" for the Syro-Malankara Church. "Your Church, beloved brothers and sisters, traces its origin to the apostle St. Thomas. You possess a very ancient liturgical tradition, which had its origin in Antioch where the followers of Jesus were first called 'Christians' --- For more than 16 centuries your community remained in unbroken communion with the See of Peter. Then there was a series of difficulties which interrupted that communion. But this century has been indelibly marked by the luminous figure of Archbishop Mar Ivanios, who found wisdom and sensitivity to the cause of Christian unity in my predecessor Pius XI, to whom he made a historic visit in 1932. --- Today I wish to encourage you in your faith, in your fidelity to your ancient traditions, in your sincere efforts to promote fraternal relations with your brothers and sisters of the Jacobite and Orthodox churches and other ecclesial communions. May your constant aspiration be that the time will soon come when the prayer of Our Lord for perfect unity among all his disciples will be realized ---"

(Origins Feb 20, 1986 vol. 15 No. 36 p 591)  
margin

In the field of evangelization and pastoral care the Oriental Catholic Churches in India are <sup>generally</sup> reacting against certain unnatural restrictions imposed upon them by the predominantly Latin rite Catholic Bishops' Conference of India, in spite of their immense potential in terms of personnel and aptitude. If the existing restrictions are removed, this growing and dynamic Church could prove a powerful instrument for the evangelization and spiritual enrichment of the vast sub-continent of India.

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*[The text on this page is extremely faint and illegible due to low contrast and blurring. It appears to be a list or series of entries.]*



Manila

THE HISTORY OF CHRISTIAN CHURCH IN INDO-  
PAKISTAN: ST. THOMAS TO PROTUGUESE  
PERIOD

Emanuel R. Das

Union Theological Seminary  
Manila, Philippines

1572-1856

It is remarkable that the author of the Acts got the name of a contemporary king; the name of this historical character of this Indo-<sup>Rather</sup>~~Pak~~ ruler brought in with fair chronological accuracy by an author writing in a far distant country some two hundred years later. This may be that the author has received the tradition of St. Thomas' mission to India which he colored it with his imagination and merely <sup>not</sup> invented the whole thing.<sup>1</sup> Streeter has pointed out several instances in which Fathers of the second and third centuries do seem to be relying on apocryphal Acts even though they were known to be apocryphal, and has drawn attention to the way in which a statement made by one Father on such authority may be repeated in all good faith by others and become the received opinion.<sup>2</sup> None of his instances concern Thomas, and in general the references to this apostle are so slight as to make it very difficult to judge whence they may have been derived. It is sure that some of the Fathers were influenced indirectly by the Acts. Streeter himself says, 'in the majority of cases .....  
... when the Fathers quote a "tradition," it is probable that they not referring directly to the text of Apocryphal Acts, but to the stories current by the word of the mouth'.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Firth, op.cit., p.12.

<sup>2</sup>Streeter B. Hillman, The Primitive Church (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1929), ch.1.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p.15.

India. This further testify by friars who were put to death in Quilon, north west of Bombay.<sup>1</sup> As to other parts India, he has not visited them and he is not sure of them; but of South India he is an eye witness.

#### Native Tradition of Thomas

There are some local traditions existing beside the Edessian and Alexanderian traditions. These traditions claimed to be independent but it is not possible to prove that how far they are independent because of the datings of these sources have not been established. These sources contain many written, unwritten songs, oral and written traditions connected with families, churches and places.

Songs. There are two written songs about the tradition of St. Thomas and his preaching in India. 'Thomas Rabban Patter' (song) and 'Margam Kali Patter' (The song of the Way). The Thomas Rabban Patter is a better representation than all other accounts.<sup>2</sup> Thomas the apostle coming from Arabia, landed in Maliankara in the year 50 A.D. in the month of Dhanu (December-January). After a short stay there he proceeded to Malianpuram and China. Coming to Mailapuram port he sailed to Maliankara, being invited

<sup>1</sup> Tisserant, op.cit., pp.20-20.

<sup>2</sup> Podipara J. Placid, The Thomas Christians (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, Ltd., 1970), p.20.

by the king Teruvanchikulam and founded seven churches.<sup>1</sup>  
 This poem further describes that he was asked by Brahmins to join them in their sacrifice to Kali. But he with sign of cross destroyed the temple and Brahmins in their fury pierced him with a lance. This tradition<sup>differ</sup> with other traditions, with little difference. In 1523 the Protugese opened the tomb of St. Thomas and found in it a vassel containing earth, fragments of a skull and a few bones with the iron head of a lance.<sup>2</sup> The local<sup>tradition</sup> offer a striking similarity with the Edessian tradition. The Eddessian tradition says that the relics of the Apostle was removed from India to Edessa. When Protugese excavated the tomb, they only found a lance and few bones. The Rabban song and the archeological finding corroborate strikingly and in the face of these archeological findings it is hard to deny the tradition of St. Thomas.

#### Theoral Tradition

It is very hard to convince the Thomas christians that St. Thomas was never in their midst. The educated among them may listen to the arguments with patience but not without their final protest. To historian or travellers they point out with their fingers the places where St.

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., pp. 20-21.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. 24-25.

### Taxila Tradition

There is a tradition existing in the christians of Taxila that St. Thomas came to Taxila and stayed for sometime in Taxila. This tradition tells as well about the conversion of people to Christian Faith. The christians of Taxila celebrate a feast in the commemoration of St. Thomas in the month of June. The christians of Taxila pointed to a humped place in the ruins of Taxila as Thomas' house. It is not sure whether this tradition is influenced by the Acts or it exists independently. The christians of that place believe very strongly that St. Thomas did visit Taxila and afterwards he left for other place. This tradition can be confirmed by the Acts, where it is given that St. Thomas after staying in the kingdom of Gundaphorus, he left for other kingdom. It is further testified by Gundaphorus as historical character who was the ruler of Punjab, and Taxila being his capital. This is an oral tradition which handed down through ages. It can be suggested that when the Kushans invaded Punjab, and the Parthian rulers were driven out by them; at that time St. Thomas left Taxila. The Acts itself describes two journeys taken by St. Thomas: one to Gundaphorus kingdom and second to Mazdai's kingdom. This illustrates <sup>the possibility of</sup> St. Thomas coming to Taxila and later he took another journey to Mazdai's court.

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The writer has heard this tradition from the Taxila christians.

## Chapter Two

### The Pre-Portuguese and Portuguese Period

The knowledge about first five or six centuries of Church existence in India is quite vague. There is very little information recorded about the existence of christian communities in India. The christian communities lived as tolerated minority. The antagonism prevailed with the rise of Islam in seventh century. The prophet Muhammad made his departure from Mecca to Medina in the year 622 A.D., and within two hundred years his followers had made themselves the masters on the land and sea. India came under the rule of muslim rulers and the position of Christianity got worsened. The Middle Ages were the time of eruption and movement among the Turkish and the Mongolians peoples of Central Asia; hordes of them migrated eastward, southward and westwards conquering and devastating. The Turks accepted Islam and the Mongols wavered between Islam and Christianity but they turned to Islam. Raja Timur carried out bloodthristy campaigns of devastation in China and Central Asia and Christianity was utterly wiped out of these areas.<sup>1</sup> North India suffered a fearful invasion by Timur in 1398, and the christian communities which came in his way were destroyed. The

Christianity in that period became an insignificant communities in few places such as Malabar. Because of war, persecution and demoralization under Muslim rule the Christianity became a ~~remnant~~ precarious remnant.<sup>1</sup>

From the late thirteenth century onwards the emissaries from the Western European Church and European travellers began to appear in India. The growth of the Mongol power alarmed the leaders of the west and the Popes of the Rome took the initiative to make some contacts with the Mongols. The embassies to Mongol Khans were sent; some political and some religious, concerned to spread the Gospel, and some Friars were sent to Mongol Khans.<sup>2</sup> Some of them passed through India and brought back to Europe the tales about what they had seen. New life came into the missionary efforts with the foundation of the Franciscan and the Dominican Orders in the first half of the thirteenth century and this guided a new missionary enterprise in the eastern countries.<sup>3</sup> In 1252 Pope Innocent IV founded a Society of Wayfarer for Christ. They had need of all their faith and spirit of renunciation on their long and most arduous journeys from Europe into the

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<sup>1</sup>Browne, L.E., The Eclipse of Christianity in Asia (London: C.U.P., 1933), ch.111

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<sup>1</sup>Browne, L.E., The Eclipse of Christianity in Asia (London: C.U.P., 1933), ch.111

<sup>2</sup>Dawson, C., The Mongol Mission (New York: Sheed And Ward, 1955), pp. 219-224

<sup>3</sup>Stephen, Neill., The Story of Christian Church in India and Pakistan (Madras: C.L.S., 1970), p.22

heart of Asia and furtherest parts of China.<sup>1</sup> John of Monte Corvino, a Franciscan who had already some experience of Asia, was sent by Pope Nicholas IV in 1289 with letters to several of the chief Mongols. Corvino in his letter says that he remained in India wherein stands the church of St. Thomas, for thirteen months and <sup>in</sup> that place and other places he baptized about one hundred persons.<sup>2</sup> Another mission of Friars came to India in 1321. This consisted of four Franciscans, Thomas of Tolentino, James of Padua, Peter of Siene and Demittius of Tiflis. These four were traveling to China as reinforcement for the promising mission that Corvino had started; but they never reached China and instead became martyrs in India.<sup>3</sup> With them came a Dominican Friar, a Frenchman called Jourdain Catalani de Severac, who seemed to have sent to work in India. They landed at Thana near Bombay harbour, where they found some christians who received them kindly.<sup>4</sup> Jourdin left the four Franciscan, to northwards on the mainland towards Broach. In his absence the four Friars were killed by the mublins. He returned after a week and was allowed to remove the remains of the martyrs

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<sup>1</sup>Dawson, op. cit. pp. 233-237.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. 224-237

<sup>3</sup>Tisserant, op. cit., 19-22

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

to a place which he called Sefa, where there was church  
 and he buried them. Jordon continued his work for two  
 and a half years, enduring much privation and presecution  
 but baptizing many persons.<sup>1</sup> After his  
 return to Europe, he reported on his mission in India and  
 state of christianity there. Pope John XXI, consecrated  
 him Bishop of Quilon and he set again for India in 1330.  
 Jordon claimed that he and his helpers have baptized ten  
 thousand or more. He was confident, given two or three  
 hundred friars, who could preach faithfully and fervently  
 the Catholic faith, as many might be baptized every year.<sup>2</sup>  
 John de Marignole arrived in Quilon on Palm Sunday and  
 stayed there for a year and four months. Marignoli found  
 there a church of Latin rites. Here <sup>he</sup> dwelt during his stay  
 and preached the Gospel.<sup>3</sup> Marignoli erected the memorial  
 pillar near the church and after fourteen months of stay  
 left this city. Marignoli seems to be the last of the  
 friars to visit India before the coming of Portuguese.<sup>4</sup>  
 Nicolas de Conti visited India several times between 1415  
 and 1438. He said that there were thousands of christians  
 at Mylapore and all over the other parts of India. Conti  
 is the last traveller to leave any account of christianity

<sup>1</sup>Stephen, op. cit., p.24

<sup>2</sup>Ogilvie, J.N., The Apostles of India ( London:Hodder &  
 Stouhton, 1915), pp.68-70

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Firth, op. cit. p. 42.

in India before the arrival of the Portuguese. The church in India continued to exist and maintained itself; against the vicissitude and all tendencies to syncretism and absorption until at last Europe found its way to India.

#### The Portuguese

The second half of the fifteenth century is famous in the history of the world as the time of the great voyages of discovery undertaken by the maritime nations of western Europe, which led to the founding of colonial empires in Africa and Asia. The pioneers in this enterprise were the Spain and Portugal and the primary motive was to find a route for trade with pepper land. The other important event in the history of India was the invasion of Babar, the Mogul, who made himself the master of northwest India. The Moguls brought unity to India. The Moguls were tolerant of other faiths and did their utmost to promote the welfare of all mankind under their rule. Their rule though autocratic, was never harsh and justice was on the whole well administered throughout their wide realm. And it was this great empire that new arrivals from Europe and missionaries had to deal.

The Muslims had been in control of the seas and Europe was wholly cut from Asia and the East. The old

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trade routes both land and sea were controlled by muslims  
 and Europe had no direct access to the Spices and other  
 treasures of Asia. The European powers attempt to cir-  
 cumvent the muslims' power and to find new route lying  
 outside muslim control. The Portuguese after many voyages  
 succeeded in rounding the Cape of the Good Hope and  
 began to sail up to the east coast of Africa, and at length  
 in 1498 Vasco da Gama guided by an Arab pilot reached  
 India and landè-d at Calicut<sup>1</sup>. The long-sought goal was  
 attainèd. Vasco da Gama sailed back to Portugal and that  
 route was known, fresh and larger fleets made the voyage  
 to India every year. The new era in the history of Indian  
 church began with the coming of the Portuguese. The major  
 object was trade and trading station were established  
 along the<sup>west</sup>/coast and the Portuguese influence grew steadily.  
 They did not have a desire of founding a great empire,  
 what they required was possession of small number of  
 strong points, based on which their fleets could chase the  
 muslims off the seas and their trade could open up  
 commerce with the hinterland<sup>2</sup>. This, however, was not  
 accpmplished without violence and strife. Massacres took

<sup>1</sup>Wallbank T. Walter, A Short History of India and Pakistan  
 (New York: Mentor Book, 1958), pp. 54-55

<sup>2</sup>Stephen, op. cit. pp.30-31

place and were followed by reprisal, with a result that a bitter enmity grew between Portuguese and Muslims. In 1510 Albuquerque, the second governor, captured Goa and adjoining territory from the Sultan of Bijapur.<sup>1</sup> Goa became the center of administration and capital of all Portuguese settlement in Asia. Though it was the hope of gain that brought Portuguese to India but along with this was the purpose to promote the spread of christianity among those who came under their rule. Popes granted them rights of dominion and commercial monopoly in the new acquired territories. Goa soon emerged as a city of great palaces and churches, and several of Roman Catholic Order were represented in its convents. The idolatry must be stopped in the territories held by the christian kings and idoltrous worship should not be tolerated in those territories.<sup>2</sup> Albuquerque encouraged and invited his men for mixed marriages between Portuguese and Indian women. Large number of it took place, the women being first baptized, thus a large Indo-Portuguese population grew up in Portuguese stations.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Riencourt de. Amaury, The Soul of India ( New York: Harper & Brothers, Publishers, 1960), pp. 187-188

<sup>3</sup>Christianity in India, ed. Perumalil, H.C., (India: Prakasam Publications, 1972), p. 47.

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The Portuguese Padroado

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By the series of papal Bulls issued in the fifteenth and the sixteenth centuries the Portuguese crown was entrusted the obligation to maintain stand and equip churches and missions, what came to be called Padroado. The crown was granted certain ecclesiastical revenues within Portugal and the right to propose candidates to papacy for the sees and ecclesiastical benefices in Africa and Asia. Such a concession hinged on the condition that the crown would assume responsibility for providing good missionaries and the appropriate financial support for the religious establishment and activities in the territories acquired by conquest.<sup>1</sup> Several of the fifteenth century Popes granted them rights of dominion and commercial monopoly in the newly acquired territories. The problem soon arose between Portugal and Spain on power and boundaries between their respective spheres of influence. This power-conflict between Portugal and Spain impeded the work of the missionaries. In 1493 Pope Alexander VI, to settle the rivalry between them, set a boundary of power and influence in the lands already acquired and yet to be discovered.<sup>2</sup> Along with this enactment went a command to Spanish and Portuguese kings

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<sup>1</sup>Catholic Encyclopedia, XXII ( New York: 1911), pp. 488-92.

<sup>2</sup>Kidd, op. cit. pp. 225-228.

' to send to the said lands and islands good men who fear God and are learned, expert and skilled, to instruct the inhabitants in the Catholic Faith and good morals ..... and there is good hope that, if they are taught, the name of Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be confessed among them!"<sup>1</sup> .

The Portuguese fleets that came to India, therefore contained besides their sailors and soldiers and merchant s priests and friars for mission work. When Vasco da Gama landed in 1498 at Calicut, Pedro de Covilham, a friar, disembarked with him. Though nothing is known about his <sup>work</sup> (or how he died, Covilham inaugurated the modern phase of christian missionary activities in the India.<sup>2</sup> Cabral's fleet of 1500 carried a vicar, eight secular priests and eight friars (franciscan). Shortly after the arrival at Calicut, the friars converted a reputed Brahman and some leading Mayars. These successes alarmed the Moors of Calicut and convinced the Zomorin that the Portuguese missionaries were advanced agents of conquering army. The clash ensued between Cabral and Zomorin, in which three friars died and Father Henrique Alvaro of Coimbra was wounded.<sup>3</sup> .

<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Lach F. Donald, Asia in the Making of Europe, Bk 1, Vol.1 (Chicago: U.C.P., 1965), p.231.

<sup>3</sup>Lach, loc. cit.

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As early as 1512 one of these friars, Luis do Salvador, preached at Vijayanagar and was martyred there.<sup>1</sup> The Portuguese after their clash with Zomorin sailed to Cochin. Thus in Cochin and southern Malabar the Franciscans were permitted to carry on the work of John Marignoly. Along with organizing of administration in Goa went the building of the churches and convents and charitable institutions. In 1534 Goa was made the seat of a Portuguese bishop and who became the head of the ecclesiastical organization in India.<sup>2</sup>

The Franciscans took great interest in the Christians of St. Thomas who were living on the shores of Malabar, Quilon and Travancore. The christians of St. Thomas were also interested in Portuguese because of economic and social privileges aside from religious ties. They were charged with supervising the weights and keeping the seal of the city. Portuguese recognized their value and cooperation in spice trade and in negotiating with local rulers.<sup>3</sup> But the conflict developed very early when the Portuguese tried to Latinize their religious rite whereas the St. Thomas christians wanted to retain Chaldean rites.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Heersman, A., The Friars Minor in India (Karachi: Rotti Press, 1943), pp.20-22.

<sup>2</sup>Perumalil, op. cit. pp.50-51

<sup>3</sup>Tisserant, op. cit. pp.30-31.

<sup>4</sup>Rogers, Francis, The Quest for Eastern Christians. Travel and Rumors in the Age of Discovery. (Minneapolis, 1962). pp.16-17.

The Franciscans continued concentrating on St. Thomas Christians to win them to Latin rites. They were so much involved in this interest that they did not pay attention of spreading the Gospel to other places, and people. They generally worked at the ports where Portuguese exercise control or had significant influence. They had in mind that their obligation to spread Gospel, <sup>13</sup>/<sub>4</sub> only in the Portuguese territories.<sup>1</sup>

In 1502 thirteen more Franciscans disembarked in Malabar and following year brought five Dominicans under the leadership of Domingo de Sousa and shortly after that the Portuguese built a wooden church at Cochin the first in India over which the Dominicans assumed pastoral care.<sup>2</sup> King Manuel in 1514 sent an embassy to Rome, determined in the same year to regularize the religious administration of the East. By the Bull of 1500, Pope Alexander VI had granted to the Portuguese crown the power to name an Apostolic Commissary for India, who should possess all the powers of a bishop's office.

After capturing Goa, Albuquerque re-enunciated the religious and social policies of the Portuguese crown within the Padroado: relentless war against the Muslims

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<sup>1</sup>Stephen, Neill., Colonialism and Christian Missions (New McGraw-Hill Publishing Co., 1966), p. 73

<sup>2</sup>Lach, op. cit. p. 232

and toleration against the heathens. The vicar-general with Albuquerque were responsible for inaugurating the policy in Cochin and Goa of encouraging and subsidizing marriages between native women and the Portuguese. Most of the marriages contracted were between common Portuguese and low-caste natives and high caste Hindus were very critical of this policy.<sup>1</sup> The marriages of Portuguese with low-caste women, had the effect of lowering all christians in the eyes of the higher castes. And Portuguese irresponsible conduct brought disrepute to Chrisitanity. This kept the high caste Hindus away from Christian faith and the missionaries were unable to convert great number of Brahmans to christianity. Nevertheless, this Indo-Portuguese population in Goa ultimately provided a solid foundation for the extention of Christianity in India.

The Dominican and the secular devoted their time in caring for the christians communities under Portuguese control and their families. The Franciscans concentrated on proselytizing the St. Thomas christians. As the christian responsibilites spread in India and as Goa increasingly became christian, it was necessary once again, to adjust

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<sup>1</sup>Neill, op. cit. p.32

the ecclesiastical organization to meet the new conditions. In 1530 Goa officailly became the viceregal capital; four years later Pope Paul III formally elevated it to the status of an episcopal see, suffragan to Funchal.<sup>2</sup> Most of the missionaries up to this time were Franciscans with some Dominicans. But the work of christianization was carried on under the auspices of government and church. According to the policy, the temples and mosques were destroyed and public worship of Hindus and Muslims was forbidden in the Portuguese settlements. Only christians could hold public offices and enjoyed the same previleges of the of Portuguese.<sup>3</sup> Most of the menial post would be given to the neophytes and orphans.<sup>4</sup> This economic incentive attratted the low-caste people to christianity. The conversion was mostly of economic gain rather than spiritual thrist. "any converts were made by the prospects of coming under the protection of powerful foriegners, was a strong inducement to them. A conspicuous example is, conversion of Paravans - political prospects - a caste of pearl-fishers on the south east coast of India. The Paravans were enslaved by the muslims and they

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<sup>1</sup> Meersman, op. cit. p.100

<sup>2</sup> Perumalil, op. cit. p. 51

<sup>3</sup> Ferroli, D., The Jesuits in Malabar, 11, (Bangalore: C.L.S., 1955), 379-381

<sup>4</sup> Heras, H., The Conversion Policy of Jesuits in India (Bombay: C.T.S.I., 1933), pp.57-58

wanted to regain their control over the pearl-fishery trade. They desired to come under the protection of the Portuguese so that will overthrow the control of the Muslims. The Paravans folk were persuaded to ask for baptism by pointing out the advantages of coming under the Portuguese protection.<sup>1</sup> Their leader having agreed, some Friars and priests were sent from Cochin between 1535 and 1537 and practically the whole caste was baptized, about 20,000 souls. They were then left without any christian instruction or discipline, except that a few boys were taken to schools at Goa; and then their hope of protection was actualized. The Portuguese admiral attacked and defeated the fleets of Arabs and the Paravans regained their power.<sup>2</sup>

The Franciscans made large number of converts; and with financial aid from the crown, founded a number of convents, churches, hospitals, and schools and seminaries. It is only in 1538 that polices were made to recruitment and training of native christians but a small number. In 1541 Master Diego de Borba founded a college of Holy Faith in Goa as training center for the native christians.<sup>3</sup> At about the same time Friar Vincente de Lagos established

<sup>1</sup>Ferrolá, op. cit. pp.140-42

<sup>2</sup>Brodrick, J., S.J. Saint Francis Xavier ( London: Burns Oates, 1952), pp.122-123

<sup>3</sup>Lach, op. cit. p.237

a seminary at Cranganore whose studentbody came to include one hundred boys from the most aristocratic families of St. Thomas Christians.<sup>1</sup>

While the missionaries made converts and built schools, the Portuguese state with the conjunction of church began to lay down a harsher policy in India. To European statesmen of sixteenth century, religious uniformity was normally deemed<sup>as</sup> an essential prerequisite for political stability and unity. The presence of muslims and heathens within the body politics of Portuguese India could be viewed in Lisbon and Goa as a threat, actual and potential, to effective governing and internal peace. War against the muslims was generally considered to be "holy" and was looked upon by the Portuguese as a continuation in India of the struggle in Europe and Africa against the Moors. The problem of heathens who persisted in their way of life was difficult to resolve. Albuquerque has pursued a policy of friendship and toleration towards heathens; but this mild policy had failed to produce the desired religious uniformity.<sup>2</sup>

The situation in 1540 was that the Portuguese had established themselves firmly on the west coast with their

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<sup>1</sup>Meersman, op. cit. pp. 68-74

<sup>2</sup>Lach, loc. cit.

sang the catechism to a popular tones in public places; they admitted heathens and muslims to attend mass; through the pupils who studied in the Jesuit schools, heathens relatives and friends received knowledge of christianity. Much more exciting prospects seemed to open up before the Jesuits with the invitation of Great Mogul emperor, Akbar Khan, to his court.

Mogul Mission. Akbar, the Great Mogul Emperor who came to throne in 1556 and ruled till 1605, was a man of great intelligence and considerable interest in religion. Akbar was sincerely interested in religion and was disturbed by the divisive effects that it tended to have on his subjects. He was surrounded by muslims of various sects, Brahmans, Parsees; and Jews, apparently felt, that political stability in an expanding empire was almost impossible to obtain and maintain in the face of deep religious divisions.<sup>1</sup>

He became dissatisfied with Islamic faith in which he was brought up and having heard about of the Jesuit priests in Goa, he asked that a mission might be sent to his court. The invitation was accepted and three Jesuits were sent to his court at Fatihpur Sik<sub>ri</sub>.<sup>2</sup> Akbar received them with great kindness and honor. They were allowed to

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<sup>1</sup> Lach, op. cit. p.275

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

furnish a chanel for christian worship and to teach without restrictions. Fr. Monserrate was made tutor to emperor's second son Murad. Akbar himself had frequent conversations with them, on religious topics; he appeared to welcome their teaching. He arranged for public debate between the Jesuits and muslims teachers; took pleasure in listening to their religious discussions. Missionaries were free to preach and make conversions, but they preferred to stay close to Akbar and spend their time in teaching Portuguese to his son. The Jesuits concentrated on Akbar with the hope that he may be converted and that will lead to landslide conversion; did not work out of the court, in the mogul populace. Pinheiro was the first of the Jesuits to turn his attention to the mogul populace and generally remained in Lahore with his church and congregation.<sup>1</sup> Very little is recorded about his mission in Lahore and his congregation.

At first the hopes of the Jesuits ran high, but they were acting under misapprehension. Akbar was turning towards his own eclectic religion, the Din Illahi, a synthetic faith which was intended to bring all the subjects of the Mogul empire into unity. At the end of

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p.277

three years the Jesuits got frustrated and returned to Goa. The second mission was sent in 1590 and the third mission in 1599. The third mission was led by Jerome Xavier, the nephew of Francis Xavier, highly skilled disputant; he was at the court of the great Mogul Emperor almost continuously from 1595 till 1615 and he became a personal friend of Akbar<sup>1</sup>. But christianity did not progress in the royal family or the nobles as it was expected by the Jesuits. The converts of any kind were very few. In 1601 Akbar made it legally possible for his subjects to accept the christian faith<sup>2</sup>. His successor Jehangir was exceedingly friendly with Jesuits and he permitted three of his nephews to be instructed and baptized. The influence of the Jesuits on the ladies of the royal family was considerable and this was the high point of mission<sup>3</sup>. Jehangir died in 1627 and his successors were fanatic muslims. In this period the Jesuits became Chaplains to the Armenian and other christians about the court and the hope of any kind of extensive conversion of Hindus and Muslims died away. The result would have been different, if the Jesuits had given more attention to the Mogul populace.

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<sup>1</sup>Firth, op. cit. p.108

<sup>2</sup>Neill, op. cit. p.41

<sup>3</sup>Barnes C. Lemuel, Two Thousand Years of Missions Before Carey ( Philadelphia: The American Baptist Publication Society, 1900), p.98

. IN the early days of Mogul mission the Jesuits concentrated on the royal family and their efforts largely on converting the King. Actual conversion from the high class were rare but fair number of converts were made from the lower classes both of Hindus and Muslims. The Jesuit started working in Delhi in 1650, after emperor Shahjahan had moved his capital to the new city, called Shahjanabad. At that time there were 120 christians in the city.<sup>1</sup> During the time of Aurangzeb, the Jesuits had to work with much caution and secrecy, but by the end of the seventeenth century the size of the Delhi congregation has grown to 300 and two small churches had been built.<sup>2</sup> Christians along with the other residents of Delhi, suffered heavily when the city was sacked by the army of Nadir Shah in 1739. Both of the churches were destroyed and the congregation scattered. Work was resumed shortly afterwards but again was disrupted when the Jesuits were banished from the Portuguese dominion. In 1783, there was hardly any church and congregation found in that vicinity.<sup>3</sup>

#### The Madura Mission

The sixteenth century in India had been a time of ups and downs for Roman Catholic missions; the seventeenth

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<sup>1</sup>Hayward E.W., Victor, The Church As Christian Community (London: Lutter-worth Press, 1966), 18-19

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

was to be distinguished by one <sup>of</sup> the most remarkable undertaking in the whole of history of Christian Church. In 1605 an Italian Jesuit, Robert de Nobili after a short stay at Fisher Coast, arrived in the great city of Madura, the center of Tamil culture in South India, and his missionary work there is known as Madura mission.<sup>1</sup> Before he arrived at Madura, there was already a mission station there under the charge of Portuguese Jesuits Fr. Fernandez. He had been there since 1595, ministering to occasional Portuguese traders and christian immigrants from Fisher Coast. These people were not belonging to Madura itself but immigrants. He was useful as an intermediary in Portuguese business and, he was protected by the King. He ran an elementary school under a Hindu master, and a small dispensary; but as an evangelist he was a failure and had not been able to make any impression on the people of Madura.<sup>2</sup> Father Fernandez followed the method familiar to him of Goa, of turning the converts as nearly as possible into Portuguese. The higher indians caste has invincible repugnance for the manners and customs of the Portuguese and this close association of the faith with Portuguese customs made it practically impossible for any man of

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<sup>1</sup> Neill, *A History of Christian Missions*, pp. 182-183

<sup>2</sup> Firth, op. cit. 108-109

standing or respectable position to consider of becoming christian. Nobili was distressed to find that Portuguese method of Europeanizing all converts had made christianity so detestable in the eyes of all respectable Hindus that the conversion of even a caste man was hardly to be expected. Nobili decided to change this approach of Portugolizing of converts. This was the first step taken by European missionary towards contextualization of the Christian Faith. In order to win the high caste Hindus, Christianity had to inculturate and, for this Nobili had to become an Indian rather than standing outside of the situation and culture of the country and expecting the people of the land to change their culture and its values. He recognized the need of recognizing the culture prevalent in the Indian society, and without recognition of the culture and its values Christianity can never penetrate in the people of the land. Nobili accepted the Indian culture and its caste system and became one with the situation and with the people. He separated himself from the Portuguese missionaries and their methods and approaches. Having determined to make himself an Indian, in order that he might win the high caste Hindus, he adopted the dress of the Hindus and the sacred thread of a Brahman, a sign

of twice born Brahman<sup>1</sup>. He made a careful study of the Brahman's customs, practices and prejudices, abandoned everything that could offend them, such as eating of the meat and wearing of leather shoes. He even mastered the classical Tamil, Talugu and Sanskrit. He is believed to be the first European scholar of ancient classical Indian languages. He conformed strictly to the social requirement of the caste, living the life of rigid, ascetic Brahman devotee but inculcating Christianity.<sup>2</sup> He kept himself ceremonially pure against defilement by untouchables and engaged in a long vigils and other austerities. It takes great measure of sacrifices in adopting a life of Sannyasi Guru in that climate. He became vegetarian, using wooden sandals and wearing a rope of Hindu holyman. Following these methods he was able to convert numerous Hindus from the higher caste.<sup>3</sup>

Nobili's methods and approach was at once crowned with great success. The news of this new teacher spread in the town and interest of the people arose in his teaching. In February 1607 he was able to begin instructing a group of young men. His method was to hold public discussions on religious subjects, rival teaching of Hinduism and Christianity. The scholastic method of argument recast

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<sup>1</sup>Robinson, op. cit., p.75

<sup>2</sup>Barnes, op. cit., p. 95

<sup>3</sup>Aberlay, op. cit., p. 43

in Indian form, with apt illustrations from the Indian classics, proved remarkably convincing, and within a year he was able to baptize ten high caste Hindus.<sup>1</sup> As far as possible Nobili allowed his converts to retain their old way of life, and he did not Portugulized them. Neither he segregated them from their families, relatives and community but let them live with them so that they can be influence to others. Unlike Portuguese approach that after conversion, they will transfer the convert to the mission houses for further Portugulization. Nobili allowed to keep the kudumi, the tuft of hair which the Portuguese missionaries had ordered their converts to cut off. They might continue wearing sacred thread, the sign of twice caste, though this was to be slightly different from that worn by Hindus, and was to be put on with the Christian prayers and not with Hindu ceremonies. They could continue wearing their native Indian dress rather than Portuguese dress which was given to every convert by the Portuguese missionaries. On the contrary, Nobili did not Europeanize his convert but let them live like an Indian with all their social and cultural values. His method of accommodation was sanctioned by a Papal

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<sup>1</sup>Ferroli, op. cit., p.350

Bull in 1623 which declared that " out of compassion for human weakness , Nobili converts are permitted to retain the plait of hair, the Brahmanical thread, the sandalwood sign on the forehead and the customary ablution of their caste."<sup>1</sup> Nobili believed and thought explicitly that, when a man become christian, he need not <sup>to</sup> leave his caste or station in life; for he was persuaded that caste was a social custom parallel to distinctions of class and rank in Europe, and an inevitable feature of the Indian way of life - just as the Apostles treated the institution of slavery as an inevitable feature of life in the Roman Empire, and did not appose it outrageously. Nobili wrote in one his letters:

"By becoming christian one does not renounce his caste, nobility or usages. The idea that christianity interferes with them has been impressed upon the people by the devil, and is great obstacle to Christianity. It is this that has stricken the work of Fr. Fernandez with sterility."<sup>2</sup>

After more than fifty years of work, Nobili died at Milapure in 1656. At the time of his death the christians connected with Madura Mission were reckoned at 100,000.<sup>3</sup>

After his death Jesuits mission was carried on by his successors  
on the same lines and approach which inaugurated.

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<sup>1</sup>Robinson, op. cit., p.76

<sup>2</sup>Firth, op. cit. p.112

<sup>3</sup>Barnes, op. cit., p.97

by Nobili.

John de Britto, of a noble Portuguese family, came to India in 1673 and joined the Madura Mission. His name is specially associated with the district of Ramnad. Here the mission had enjoyed considerable success. He converted numerous to Christianity. Britto was many times arrested and tortured but later was released by Raja of Ramnad. He moved from one place to another, camping in forests and living in villages. People flocked around him and almost 4000 were baptized in the year 1692.<sup>1</sup> He left a deep impression and influence on christians and Hindus by his devotion and gentleness. He was arrested and was publicly beheaded on 4th February 1693 outside the little town of Oriyur.

Another famous personality of Madura Mission was the Italian Fr. Constant Joseph Beschi. Beschi adopted all the ways and manners of Hindu Guru. He suffered lots of hardships and dangers especially in the early years of his service, when he lived a wandering life in the districts where the rulers were often hostile; later he won the confidence of Mogul General Chanda Sahib who protected him. During the years when Chanda Sahib ruled Trichnopoly (1736-1741), he was even said to have the

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<sup>1</sup>Firth, op. cit. p.118

made Fr. Beschi his devan and assigned to him the revenues of certain villages, which Beschi used for the mission.<sup>1</sup> Beschi acquired an extraordinary mastery of Tamil language for which he is known as European Tamil scholar. He wrote many spiritual writings for catechism and a christian epic called, "Tembavani". Through these missionaries and their helpers the work went on through many vicissitudes but with success. Great number of people were baptized often perhaps without any preparation, but it often happened, whether from the fewness of the missionaries or the great distances to be covered, or the disturbed state of country.

Nobili and his successors made a bold experiment and manifested courage and devotion and endurance. But this method of accommodation was highly criticized by other missionaries who believe in proselytization. The objection was that the Jesuits by the method of accommodation were assimilating Christianity too closely to Hinduism; and to which they replied that in large measure the customs and social values of the country must be recognized, at least until the Church has firmly and widely established, otherwise the Hindus would not accept Christianity. Their

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<sup>1</sup>Firth, op. cit. p. 120

aim, was to free christianity from its foreignness and its association with the Portuguese state. This reproach of foreignness is still one of the greatest handicaps in Pakistan. It was their attempt to free christianity from its Europeanism and make it a an Indian Christianity. The Portuguese and other religious Orders were against this approach. To them the true Christianity is, if it is presented in European dress - a limitedness of understanding Christ and His message. They preached the Gospel of Christ, which was already Europeanized and Latinized Christ. No doubt the Jesuits went too far in their attempt and their greatest failure was the taking of caste system into the church practically unchanged. Whatever the flaws were; Nobili attempted earnestly to de-europeanized christianity and lead it towards Indianized Christianity, and paved the way for later contextualization of Christianity which is still going on.

To settle the matter between the Jesuits and other Orders, Pope Clement XI, in 1703 sent out a special legate, the Patriarch de Tournon.<sup>1</sup> Tournon decreed at every point in condemnation of Jesuits' practices. In all matters of rituals and customs, all must be carried out exactly

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<sup>1</sup>~~Robinson, op. cit. p. 76~~

<sup>1</sup>Robinson, op. cit. p.76

according to the rules of Rome as these had been developed since the Counter-Reformation. Strict limitations were imposed on the separation between christians of different castes, as they had been practiced in the Jesuits' mission from the beginning. Tournon showed complete disregard for the Jesuits views and ideas. The Jesuits became increasingly unpopular, and their very success had made them an object of envy to other Orders. In 1773 all Jesuits were ordered to leave Portuguese dominions. The Portuguese government brought pressure on the Pope, with the result that in 1773 Pope Clement XIV ordered the suppression of the whole Society.<sup>1</sup> The Jesuits were arrested, deported and imprisoned. Some Jesuits transferred to other Orders and few continued their work quietly out of Portuguese dominions. The majority had to leave and abandon the work to which they had dedicated their lives. This had a disastrous effect on the missionary work in the India. There were no clergy to take their places and many places left without any priest. The secular priests were sent, who were not enough to continue the work inaugurated by the Jesuits. Many christians in this period lapsed into Hinduism and many were forcibly converted to Islam.

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<sup>1</sup>Firth, op.cit. p.124

### Expansion through Migration

The christians who accepted Christianity in this period, did not necessarily remain in the areas where they were converted or baptized but migrated elsewhere. This was another way of influencing the native people to christianity; through their interaction with non-christian peoples. The christians settled in different areas of Mogul empire and was cared by Je uits in those place. . From Goa many settled in the kingdom of Sundem, and in the areas under Bijapur and Kanara coast. They exerted indirect influence on other people. From Fishery coast christians migrated to the neighboring places. Thus the church in Tranquerbar owes its origin to them.<sup>1</sup> Many people migrated to Madura and Mogul empire. The christians in Tanjore were those who migrated from Nagapatanam and from the Fishery coast and Goa.<sup>2</sup> Mostly these christians migrated to other places in search of job or to escape from persecution. Their migration from the Portuguese dominions to other places was basically for the purpose of getting job and better life.

Undoubtly christians moved many different areas of the country and the Gospel was spread through their migration to other places, and brought other religions in interaction with christianity.

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<sup>1</sup>Perumalil, op. cit. pp.79-80

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

### Analysis

South India was the special field of Roman Catholic missionaries. There was very little work done by them in North India except the Mogul Mission which was a failure. Even in South India the missionary work was hampered by internal missionary conflicts, government and missionaries, Portugal and Rome. Missionary zeal in Europe seemed to be dying down, and it was hard to replace missionaries who had died or had returned to their home lands. Great devotion had been manifested and great results had been achieved. It has been reckoned that in the year 1750 there were roughly a million christians in India and by the end of century this number has been reduced by half.<sup>1</sup> Christianity had not died out, <sup>but</sup> continued to exist although gravely weakened.

The sixteenth century Portuguese were by no means novices in the questions pertaining to the propagation of the faith, the battling the infidels and conversion of the heathens. They had played active part in the Crusades and as early as 1319 had national Crusading Militia. The Portuguese kings acted as the propagator of Christian Faith in the lands which they have acquired . . . with Rome's approval and encouragement. The progress of the christian

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<sup>1</sup>Neill, op. cit. p.52

mission in Portuguese period consequently related to the successes and failures of the empire-building.

The Portuguese brought with them in India two principles which were incompatible with the peaceful extension of their commerce and propagation of the faith. They transported to Asia all rancour of their conflicts in Europe with Muslims. Secondly commerce was understood as monopoly; the Indian seas belonged to that part of the world which the Pope had given to the king of Portugal as his dominion, and therefore no other nation had the right to trade in them. As the majority of the traders were muslims, the two principles worked together; the muslims must be crushed in order to prevent their infringing the commercial monopoly of the Portuguese; one of the best ways of bringing about this destruction was to curb and harry their trade.<sup>1</sup> These two principles immediately created an animosity between Portuguese and muslims of India. This attitude towards muslims consequently made muslims the enemies of christianity and missionary work. And muslims were the great political power of India at that time. The muslims in their territories became harsh towards the propagation of christianity and persecuted christians and demolished their churches. The Portuguese

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<sup>1</sup>Neill, Colonialism and Christian Missions, pp.70-71

in their territories as well demolished and persecuted the muslims. The close association of christianity with Portuguese power and politics harmed christainity and its work. And this close association of christianity with Portuguese power hampered the missionary work and christianity looked like a religion of sword rather than love. There was no toleration and love manifested by the christians( Pottuguese) towards the native people and their customs and way of life. The other flaw was that Christianity was associated with Europeanism and European customs and manners. This was thought that one is christian, if he adopts European manners and custom, even to the extent of dress. After the elapse of centuries this association is there and still christianity is thought to be the 'religion of the whites'.

The European missionaries failed to realize - that is, all missionaries save the Jesuits - was that, they were not propagating the message of Christ but European colored Christ that was only suited to the Europe not the land of India and her people. If they were to make headway in India, they were to make some concessions to local customs, failing this, christianity made very progress. Hardly more than one per cent of Indian

and Pakistani population has gone over to christianity after long years of intercourse with Europe, whereas 25 per cent of the population went over to Islam. This association of christianity with whites has a far-reaching effect and even today the christians in Pakistan and India are faced with this problem.

The Portuguese did not plant the church in India but transplanted European church, in India, with rituals and manners which were suited to Europe.

The Portuguese believed, if Portuguese dominion was to maintain in India, it was necessary to have a solid and reliable christian population on the spot. The political motive behind the propagation was very obvious, in order to maintain dominion. It was thought that religious uniformity is very necessary. The uniformity of religion, was secured through deliberate miscegenation. Albuquerque invited his men to marry the widows and daughters of the defenders of Goa, whom they have killed in the battle or subsequently burned them alive. Most of the marriages contracted were between common Portuguese and low-caste women and the high caste Hindus were very critical of this policy. This act of marriage with the low-caste women was lowering christianity in the eyes of the high caste Hindus.

The high caste Hindus eventually disliked christianity because of its association from the very beginning with the low-caste people. The vow <sup>of</sup> marriage was taken very lightly by the Portuguese and was not clearly understood by the natives. This general irresponsible conduct of the Portuguese showed the European in their worst possible light, and brought disrepute to Christianity. A considerable number of the inhabitants did in time become christians but it left far-reaching effect and blot on christianity which is hardly washed up-to now. This conversion was mostly done through force or miscegenation.

All the Roman Catholic authorities of that time were agreed that idolatry was an abomination, and that the public practice of it in the dominions of a christian king would call down the wrath of God upon the whole land, and therefore it must be suppressed, if necessary by force. Hindu temples and mosques were destroyed and their property and revenues handed over to the church. Portuguese thought that by destroying the temples and mosques they would be able to root out Hinduism and Islam from India. They miscalculated the strength and deep rootedness of Indian culture and its influence. Hinduism and Islam took more strong hold of his people. They failed to understand the

boundless richness of Hindu faith, its universal appeal, its tolerance, the profundity of Hindu philosophy and its enduring roots among Indian people. The millions of people would have brought to christianity, if the European missionaries had had a greater understanding, not only of Hindu faith and Indian culture, but also of themselves and christian faith. "We would have been the masters of India if we had been the masters of ourselves!"<sup>1</sup> The majority of converts embraced christianity out of fear, intimidation or enslavement of people by Portuguese. Fr. Lancilotto writes:

"...Some were baptized through fear, others through wordly gain, and others for filthy and disgusting reasons..... Many people come in order to be baptized, and I ask them why they want to become christians. Some reply because the lord of the land tyrannize and oppresses them, and others reply that they must become christians because they have nothing to eat!"<sup>2</sup>

With these methods of conversion within a century of the conquest third of the population of Goa and other Portuguese territories became christians. The missionary work was concentrated only in the places controlled by the Portuguese, and there is hardly any work done out of these territories except the Mogul mission. The Portuguese authorities and missionaries recognized their responsibility of propapating the christian faith within their territories and beyond

<sup>1</sup>Tawney, R.H., Religion and the Rise of Capitalism (New York: Penguin Books INC., 1947), p.201

<sup>2</sup>Boxer, C., R., Race Relations in the Portuguese Colonial Empire (London: 1963), pp.59-60

that they felt no burden for it.

Apart from this there were other inducements; political, economic and social inducements. Some embraced christianity to have Portuguese protection, some for the sake of economic gain and some for social uplift, which the Portuguese happily extended. Paravans became christians to have Portuguese protection because they were enslaved by the muslims. They had been suffering from the aggression of muslims traders and rulers and desired to put themselves under the protection of the king of Portugal. For this suzerainty to become effective it was required that they be baptized; and baptized they were, but later left without any kind of spiritual care and instruction. The Hindus in the Portuguese territories became christians to have the protection and to be saved from Portuguese persecution. This working of state and religion together had distorted the image of christianity and made it a religion of sword. All these political conversion failed to meet the expectations of the missionaries. Because they were not converted out of religious eagerness but out of political reasons. Political interest also motivated the prince of Tanur, whose territory was south of Calicut, to become christian. He wanted to have Portuguese military aid and he was asked to

become christian, so he was, but later he went back to his old ways.

Many converts accepted christianity out of economic benefits which the Portuguese offer to every convert. No Hindu or Muslims could get a job in Portuguese offices and public offices. To get a job was to become christian, and enjoy the privileges same as Portuguese. Most of the menial posts in the administration at Goa was given to the neophytes and orphans in charge of the missionaries. A non-christian could hardly hope employment in the Portuguese offices. This economic inducement made many low-caste people to accept christianity in order to have better livelihood and better future for their children, new European cloths which went to every convert. The missionaries adopted the policy of granting small loans to all who were willing to attend their churches, on the understanding that these loans would not be repayable as long as they would continue to attend the church. This economic inducement was one of the factor which brought low-caste people towards christianity.

Most of the low caste people became christians because christianity offered them escape from their caste and gives them a social uplift. They would be liberated

from their dirty jobs and gain social status by associating with the Portuguese. The outcaste people pressured and cajoled increasingly eager to rise to better social standing, anxious to have more opportunities in life on an equal footing with their neighbor. Being under heavier economic and social pressures, they were more ready to align themselves with Portuguese' religion.

The christianization of indian people was brought about by political, economic and social inducements. These factors attracted the underprivileged, and depressed classes. This made christianity the religion of the low-caste people, consequently unable to penetrate in the higher classes of society. There was hardly any attempt to prepare native clergy. The Orders maintain high standard for priesthood and was impossible for indian to become a priest. The missionaries used to segregate their converts from the family and society which stops any further influence on the family or community. Even the names of the converts would be changed into Portuguese names, like a Brahman was converted and given the name, Matthew de Castro. This socially alienate the convert from the society to which he was a part. The interpersonal relationships would have furnish amazing for further growth but by alienating the convert from the society could not exert any influence.

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The missionaries found *hard* to learn the native language and always depended on the interpreter. This adds to the foreignness of christianity. They did not try to translate the Bible into native languages. The Portuguese felt that their culture is higher than Indian culture and did not try to understand the strength of Indian culture. They underestimated the strength of indian culture and Brahmins control over the deeply rooted Hindus ways of life. Rather than to understand they condemned it outrageously. This condemnation of native culture made people hostile towards christianity.

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The other weakness of their missionary method was close collaboration of church and state. The natives who did not like the policies of Portuguese, would not like christianity because of its association with state. The christianity got associated with imperialism and capitalism and this impression is still there after the elapse of centuries. Even today christianity in Pakistan and India is considered as religion of the 'whites' and it is only this century that step towards the indigenization of christianity is taken and it is still in the making.

*Christianity* did not die out inspite of these mistakes but continued to exist without penetration in

the soil. These mistakes gave a distorted image of christianity and its effect is still there. The Portuguese period was more of proselytism than evangelism; brow-beating than faith sharing; coercion than free choice; a pressure than offering a possibility; more of political than spiritual.

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# The Legacy of D.T. Niles

(ABBREVIATED and reprinted from *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*. The author, Creighton Lacy, is Professor of World Christianity in the Divinity School of Duke University, North Carolina. As a Fulbright Research Scholar he spent two years in India and published two books on contemporary social thought: *The Conscience of India* and *Indian Insights: Public Issues in Private Perspective*).

## Part I

### The Work of an Evangelist

D.T. was above all an evangelist. "Evangelism is the proclamation of an event, it is also an invitation to an encounter." "Evangelism is the impact of the Gospel on the world." "Evangelism is not something we do, it is something God does." "Evangelism happens when God uses anything we do in order to bring people to Him in Jesus Christ." "The recovery of wholeness — that is the purpose of evangelism." "In our part of the world, the preacher, the evangelist, is engaged in the work of disrupting people's lives." If there is an ambivalence in these sentences between God's role and ours, it is inherent in the writer — and in the work of D.T. Niles was an Asian — and a Christian — who thought in terms of both/and rather than either/or. One of Niles' major contributions was the blending, not the contrasting, of Eastern and Western thought, of "orthodoxy" and "liberalism."

"Evangelism is witness. It is one beggar telling another beggar where to get food." Few Christians who have heard that aphorism can identify its source; even fewer could identify, by time or nation or vocation or publication, the powerful evangelist D.T. Niles.

For all the ecumenical conferences and distinguished pulpits that kept D.T. Niles "on the go," he said very little about himself. "I am not important except to God," he once wrote, and a bit later, "We who speak about Jesus, must learn to keep quiet about ourselves."

As his son Dayalan described him, "Niles was certainly no systematic theologian in the technical sense of the word." Rather, he chose a pragmatic stance in dealing with both local and ecumenical issues, a kind of action/reflection model. "His overall frame of reference is Methodist as opposed to the early Barthian dialectical position."

### Interpreting the Bible and Christian Faith



Scripture, for illustrations as well as quotations. Many of his addresses and published works were frankly, deliberately, Bible studies: for example, *Living with the Gospel* (1975), *Studies in Genesis* (1958), *As Seeing the Invisible* (1961; an interpretation of Revelation). "I cannot claim either adequate scholarship or accuracy of method," he modestly stated, "but (these essays) at least represent what happens when I read my Bible." One of the earliest of such studies, *Reading the Bible Today* (1955), has been translated into at least fifteen languages. In it Niles revealed clearly his modern, open approach to Scriptures. Truth need not be taken literally, he said. . . . In his Beecher Lectures he declared that "the Genesis account of man's sin is an account which seeks to make plain the nature of sin and not its origin."

"Some people treat every word in the Bible as equally true and inspired, and do not ask why and when it was spoken. This may lead to very wrong ideas about God." For God is the hero of the Bible stories, the evangelist explained, not individual men and women; God speaks and people answer, rather than merely recording the human quest for the divine. The Bible, he continued, gives us the word of God as news, as law or demands, as faith. In short, "the adventure of Bible reading is in praying the Holy Spirit to lead us to that point in the conversation between God and man at which we can hear what God is saying to us today."

Central to the Scriptures, to all of Christian faith, for Niles, stood Christology. "Both the New Testament and the Old Testament," he wrote, "are about

Jesus Christ and from Jesus Christ." As important — nay, as imperative — as the obligation to love may be, he affirmed in reply to J.A.T. Robinson's *Honest to God*, "it is essential . . . to hold this command to love in conjunction with the command to believe in Jesus Christ."

At the same time — and here emerges the paradox of all who engage in sincere interfaith dialogue — "the issues of Salvation and Damnation cannot be stated in terms of men's belief or unbelief in the special revelation of Christ: they can only be stated in terms of the outreach of the work and ministry of Christ himself." "To speak about the finality of Christ is not to tie oneself to where his name is actually pronounced." "There is no Saviour but Jesus and they who are saved are always saved by him. That is true without qualification." "There is no salvation except in Jesus Christ, but who shall decide how and in what guise Jesus comes to men and claims their acceptance!" To some this is the hidden or anonymous Christ; to others it is the universal word of God.

The crux of the finality issue is whether or not in Jesus Christ men confront and are confronted by the transcendent God whose will they cannot manipulate, by whose judgment they are bound, and with whose intractable presence in their midst they must reckon."

In like manner also Niles offered fresh, empirical insight into the true meaning of the Trinity. "The Christian faith is no simple Jesus-religion," he declared in the Lyman Beecher Lectures; "it is faith in God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, one God in three persons, Trinity in unity and unity in Trinity. But there is no way to the largeness of this faith except through faith in Jesus Christ."

Finally, within the Trinity, "The Holy Spirit is the missionary of the gospel. It is he who makes the gospel explosive in men's lives and in human affairs."

"This Jesus whereof we are witnesses" comes to us initially and personally in worship, in devotion. Niles's sermons drew copiously on hymns by Charles Wesley, on poems by Wordsworth, Donne, and many others, on devotional literature from the East. Would that we had collections of recorded prayers from this man of God, but they must have been profoundly private.

(Continued on Page 16, Col. 3)



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### Part II

#### The Centrality of the Christian Church

Our fellowship with Christ can only be maintained, Niles would insist, within the fellowship of the church. This is not a condition for salvation, but it is for the Christian life. "The object of evangelism is conversion," Niles declared, "conversion to Christ and personal discipleship to him. But involved also in this conversion are conversion to the Christian community and conversion to Christian ideas and ideals." In fact, he went on to explain, the normal order of mission priorities should be a welcome to the community (proselytization), an invitation to discipleship (evangelism), and a transformation of values (Christianization).

"I believe fully," Niles wrote on another occasion, "that a decision to follow Jesus Christ is inextricably linked with the decision to become a member of the Christian Church." "Faith is the faith of a community," and he quoted approvingly Karl Barth's familiar pronouncement: "One cannot hold the Christian faith without holding it in the church and with the church."

Nevertheless this serving community, according to Niles, must never be mistaken for the institutional church. "Men can only be loved into God's kingdom, they cannot be organized into it," he said. With a gentle dig at preachers he suggested, in the Warreck Lectures in Scotland, that the laity, the people of God, earn their right to preach by the daily lives they lead, whereas the ordained clergy does not have to renew its professional credentials. Similarly Niles had little use for sectarian divisions. "The finality of Jesus Christ," he declared, "is a standing judgement on denominational separateness." In *Upon the Earth* he told the devastating story

of the immigration officer who inquired about a missionary's religion: "Yes, Madam, Christian - but what damnation?"

The real test of the church's faithfulness to Christ is, of course, its activity in the world. "Those who accused Him of revolution put Him on a cross," Niles told an audience of "conservative evangelicals", "those who accuse Him of nonsense put Him in a sanctuary." Both individuals and the community are called to radical discipleship, Niles constantly affirmed. "This song of Mary (Luke 1:46-53) is still the song of the Christian revolution. This song we must sing, even though we are surprised that it is we who must sing it."

For this quiet little man from Ceylon, the essential involvement of Christians in the world has abundant biblical sanction. Leaven does not function by itself apart from the flour; salt is not used to turn fish into salt but to keep fish fresh "as fish." A hospital should never be "a stalking horse for evangelism," and presumably the same dictum applies to mission schools. The light of the world (Matt. 5:14) - both Christ and his disciples - meant "a lamp shining in the street and not one burning in the sanctuary." This lamp, he wrote on another occasion, must be filled with oil, its wick trimmed, within the sanctuary, but not left there. Most startling of all perhaps, most challenging to the complacent congregations of our day, Niles declared: "The answer to the problems of our world is not Jesus Christ. The answer to the problems of the world is the answer that Jesus Christ provided, which is the Church." That bears reflection - and action!

With his own rich family heritage D.T. Niles was, of course, keenly aware of the missionary contribution. Many of his closest friends and mentors and colleagues were missionaries, from a broad ecumenical spectrum. He knew full well the importance of the foreign mission enterprise in the past, but also its ongoing imperative. Yet he did not base his commitment on the Great Commission on "in terms of what God has done for the evangelist but in terms of what God has done for the world; not in terms of a command to be obeyed but in terms of an inner necessity to be accepted."

As a product of the missionary era, Niles was grateful and understanding. His son remarked on one occasion that there was "no critical and negative evaluation of the colonial age in his own immediate writings," and then went on to attribute this charitable outlook to "the optimism of grace." Yet his address to the world Christian community at the Evanston Assembly of the WCC contained this loving rebuke: "There is a world of difference between the missionary who comes to proclaim the truth of the Gospel and the missionary who comes to care for a people with the care of Jesus Christ." "To speak of a missionary is to speak of the world; to speak of a fraternal worker is to speak in terms of the Church." One of his earliest, most popular volumes (for the Student Volunteer Movement in 1951) also chided gently: "There is a tendency for missionary agencies to be concerned exclusively with the Church in the missionary land rather than with the land itself." "A missionary is primarily a person sent to a world and not to a church . . . not so much a person sent by a church as by its Lord."

(To be continued)

### Templeton Prize 1985

SIR Alister Hardy the distinguished British marine biologist was named on Feb. 27 the 1985 Templeton Prize winner for Progress in Religion. A leading marine biologist for fifty years, Sir Alister (89) founded in 1969 the Religious Experience Research Unit at Manchester College, Oxford.

Sir Alister in 1951 set out to convince the sceptics among his scientific colleagues with the book, "Science and the Quest for God".

His next book, "Living Stream", won him an award and medal from Yale University for "an outstanding work which is of particular interest for the spiritual life of our epoch".

Sir Alister developed his ideas further in 1979 in the book, "The Spiritual Nature of Man" in which he set out to convince intellectual sceptics that man's religious feelings are indeed part of his true nature.

(Press Release)

## Books Received

1. *Sent Free - Mission and Unity in the Perspective of the Kingdom*, By Emilio Castro, WCC, Geneva, pp 102, US\$4.75.
2. *Church And Society - Ecumenical Perspective*, Essays in honour of Paul Abrecht, The Ecumenical Review, WCC, Geneva, pp. 163.
3. *Science Education and Ethical Values, Introducing ethics and religion into the science classroom and laboratory*, (Ed) David Gosling and Bert Musschenga, WCC, Geneva, pp. 115.
4. *The Churches in Spain*, CICARWS: WCC, Geneva, pp. 32, US\$1.20.
5. *The Churches In Portugal, The Pathway To the Future*, CICARWS: WCC, Geneva, pp. 36, US\$1.20.
6. *The Churches in Italy*, CICARWS: WCC, Geneva, pp. 42, US\$1.20.
7. *Family Profiles, Stories of Families in Transition*, (Ed) Masamba Ma Mpolo, WCC, Geneva, pp. 96, US\$4.95.
8. *Faith And Faithfulness, Essays on contemporary ecumenical themes*, A tribute to Philip A. Potter, (Ed) Pauline Webb, WCC, Geneva, pp. 128, US\$5.95.
9. *Women under Racism*, PCR 1984/No. 19, WCC, Geneva, pp. 62.
10. *Confessing our faith around the world - III: The Caribbean and Central America*, (Faith and Order Paper No. 123) Introduced by Elsa Tamez, (Ed) Hans Georg Link, WCC, Geneva, pp. 110, US\$4.25.
11. *Hindu-Christian Meeting Point*, by Abhishiktananda, Revised, ISPCK, P.O. Box 1585, Kashmere Gate, Delhi 110006, pp. 128, Rs 40 (India only).
12. *Saccidananda, A Christian Approach To Advaitic Experience*, By Abhishiktananda, ISPCK, Delhi, pp. 234, Rs 51 (India only).
13. *Changes in Christian Personal Laws*, (Ed) Jyotsna Chatterji, ISPCK, Delhi, pp. 60, Rs 3.50 (India only).
14. *Autobiography of Bishop John Sadiq, Surprised by love*, ISPCK, Delhi, pp. 131, Rs 20 (India only).
15. *Mahatma Gandhi's Philosophy of Brahmacharya*, (Ed) D.A. Gangadhar, CISRS/ISPCK, pp. 71, Rs 15 (India only).
16. *Ronald Winston Bryan, Disciple and shepherd*, (Ed) Michael R. Westall, ISPCK, Delhi, pp. 121, Rs 15.00 (India only).
17. *Indian Women in Media, Focus on Women's Issues*, Lithouse Publications, ISPCK, Delhi, pp. 62, Rs 12 (India only).
18. *Christian Publishing, The Indian Experience*, (Ed) Jane R. Caleb, ISPCK, Delhi, pp. 130, Rs 20 (India only).
19. *Summary Report Of Comprehensive Survey on CBS*, Christian Broadcasting System in KOREA, 136-46, Yonji-dong, Chongno-ku, Seoul, Korea.

From Page 9

## Niles

The world church owes a lasting debt to D.T. Niles for conceiving and gathering the liturgical wealth of the Orient in the *EACC Hymnal* and writing the words for forty-five of the entries. "Even a hymnbook or a book of prayers is a form expressing a given unity," he once wrote.

In one of his Lyman Beecher Lectures, Niles quoted a Christian student as declaring that devotion to Jesus brings deliverance from "seeking the good life," from "obedience to a moral ideal." Yet in the same address he cautioned against substituting renunciation for real righteousness, piety for practice.

(To be continued)

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THE CCAN mailing list has not been revised for many years. While we would be happy to continue to send CCAN to all presently on the mailing list, we need some assurance that there is somebody at the other end!

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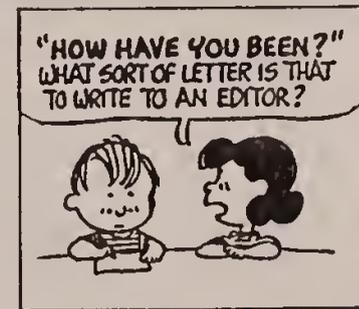
This might have to be a farewell in case we do not hear from you.

## Last Reminder and Farewell

## Courses at Ecumenical Christian Centre, Bangalore

- 'Development Journalism': 21st May to 9th June 1985. Fees: Rs 250/-. Designed mainly to impart basic writing skills to men and women involved in development work.
- 'Politics and Social Change': July to September 1985. To enable the participants to understand the various forces that operate in the political processes and to prepare them for struggles against injustice. Fees: Rs. 100/-.
- Course for women - Vicharodaya, September to November 1985. Focus on education. This is an experiment in education for graduate women; the course will review different educational systems, innovative experiments and also look into Indian realities. Fees: Rs 100/-. Free hospitality by ECC for all courses.

Apply to: ECC, PB No. 11, Whitefield, Bangalore - 560 066, India.



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- *Metropolitan Cyril Mar Baselios*

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**ECUMENICAL STRATEGIES OF THE MALANKARA CATHOLIC CHURCH**

- *Fr. C. M. George*

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An Indian Journal of Eastern Churches for Creative  
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# Editorial

## Ecumenism in Practice

His Holiness Pope John Paul II in his letter of May 28, 1987 to the Catholic Bishops in India has invited all the Catholics in India to unity and communion. There he pointed out that this unity of the Universal Church is a unity in diversity and not a unity in uniformity. Thus, he says, the Church can be a sign of unity of mankind so often divided by ethnic, political, cultural and linguistic rivalries. The Pope dissociated the diversity of rites or worship, from the elements which divided the people. On the other hand, "let us continue", he says, "to reflect on the Churches or Rites which make up her variety in unity". He urges that "there is need for the closest possible communion and collaboration between the different Rites in India."

In a pluralistic and diversified land like India, the Church has to be a sign of unity, communion and love. And this witnessing must be as indicated by His Holiness in his letter: respecting the legitimate ecclesial traditions and giving chance to the Indians to come to know of the diversity in the Catholic Church, and teaching people to live harmoniously and peacefully in a pluralistic society and tolerating one another. The Catholics must be shining examples of this tolerance. Our ultimate goal, however, is to present our Lord Jesus Christ, whose blood has been shed for us and for many in India.

There was some sort of tension in the inter-ecclesial relations in India for some time. The three churches presented their view points in a sincere attitude of brotherly charity to the legitimate authorities. After considering the various aspects of the question and the "Indian Reality," the Pope as the Supreme Visible Pastor of the Universal Church, has sent his letter. The Pope has clarified that the Catholic Church stands for justice, reconciliation and unity, and the demands of the Orientals are legitimate and in accordance with the teachings of the Second Vatican Council. The President of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of India also has positively endorsed it and written to the Catholic Bishops in India that the letter must be implemented in its detail and he has sought the collaboration of all the bishops to "educate and form our priests, religious and faithful to accept fully and cooperate in its implementation."

The letter has accepted a few basic facts: that the Oriental Catholic Churches must continue as Churches in India; that they must not be restricted but must be permitted to grow organically in India; that the Catholic Church in no way fosters uniformity in the life of the church; that the church stands for pluriformity in its life; that the fear of some people in Indian Catholicism that the growth of one church may hinder the growth of another church is

unfounded; that the Universal church does not stand for the "One Rite Movement" and that the outdated law, "one territory, one bishop, and one jurisdiction" cannot stand in the Indian ecclesial reality; and that there must be the closest unity and communion between the various churches in India.

Now it is the duty of every catholic in India to follow wholeheartedly the letter of the Pope, which he wrote "after much prayer and reflection." The priests, religious and faithful have to be educated to accept it and cooperate fully in its implementation. Since several catholics were so far educated to live in a uniform type of Catholicism, the Holy Father is asking for a reeducation. Thus each one will be educated to accept others; the other Catholic Churches, the other liturgical traditions and the other ways of thinking and theologizing. All must put an end to the interritual discussions and try very earnestly to implement the letter of the Pope in its detail. The Pope has very seriously considered the Indian Reality and it is the duty of every Catholic of the different traditions to accept it and implement it, so that we may present a united Catholicism, a united witnessing to our Lord Jesus Christ.

All Catholics in India of all the three ecclesial traditions or Rites are thus, in concrete, ensured that they can worship God in the way in which they want. This is ecumenism in practice at home. The speedy implementation of this letter will enhance confidence in the Roman leadership in the eyes of the non-Catholics also. Although some may pass judgement that there is nothing new in the papal letter, it is an epoch making document, especially in the light of the interritual discussions in India in the last few years. From the Oriental part, we fully endorse the document and we confidently hope that it will put an end to all antiecclesial discussions. We promise the closest possible communion and collaboration with our Latin brethren in India. We hope that the Catholic Seminaries, Faculties and theologians in India will take seriously the invitation of the Pope and educate the future Catholic leaders in India in accordance with the directives given in the letter, so that the future Catholics may be able to live in a pluralistic society, accepting the diversities in the Church with concord and tolerance.

Editor

Geevarghese Chediath

R. I. P.



Rev. Fr. Thomas Vellilamthadam  
(1941 - 1987)

We the Editorial Board of the Christian Orient gratefully acknowledge the great services rendered by Rev. Dr. Thomas Vellilamthadam our Review Editor. Quite unexpectedly he left us for his eternal reward on the 22nd of November 1987, leaving behind the fond memory of a committed and inspiring champion for the noble cause of the Catholicity of the Church which consists in the communion of Churches with equal rights and obligations.

## A Loving Homage to Fr. Thomas Vellilamthadam

Rev. Dr. Thomas Vellilamthadam of venerable memory passed away on 2<sup>nd</sup> November 1987. His unexpected and sad demise has immersed all his friends and colleagues in deep sorrow and it has in fact created a real vacuum which is very difficult to be filled. This small article is an attempt to assess some of the brilliant aspects of his great and dazzling personality as a loving homage to that great and noble soul.

Fr. Thomas Vellilamthadam was born at Monipally, Kerala, India on December 8, 1941. After his minor seminary course at Good Shepherd Seminary, Palai, he pursued his philosophical studies at the catholic university of Louvain, Belgium. After having finished his licentiate in philosophy at the Universite catholique de Louvain, he continued his academic studies at propaganda De Fide college in Rome where he obtained Licentiate in Theology. He was ordained priest on May 8 1969. He did his doctoral studies at Louvain and in 1973 took his Ph. D. in philosophy defending a thesis on "The concept of Repression in Herbert Marcuse."

From 1975 onwards he was professor of philosophy at St Thomas Apostolic Seminary (Pontifical Oriental Institute of Religious Studies-Paurastya Vidyapitham) Kottayam, India, and head of the department of philosophy in the same institute from 1986 onwards. He was a member of the Indian philosophical Congress, Review editor of the Christian Orient, and the associate editor of Jeevadhara. He had also served as visiting professor in many

Indian seminaries like St John's seminary, Hyderabad and Dharmaram college, Bangalore.

As my friend and colleague, I know Fr. Thomas Vellilamthadam for the last 12 years. He was just, faithful and loving. Jollity and merth never failed to accompany him; in fact it was so till his last moments. It may look paradoxical that this quality combined well with his high thinking. In more than one way, he had distinguished himself. He was a true philosopher - an original thinker, a very powerful writer, an ardent champion of the cause of the orientals, especially of the Malabar Church, an excellent professor, a person well informed about the Indian society and the third world problems and above all a loving and caring priest and a friend to all the inmates of this Institute. What is said of the young English poet John Keats may be truly said of him: that he loved the principle of beauty in all things. High thinking and simple living characterized this young philosopher too.

His early intellectual and philosophical formation at the famous Louvain university and the later advanced research and study in the same university had great influence in the making of this philosopher. His wide and extensive travels through the cities and villages of India together with his systematic reading brought him in touch with the cultural, sociological, anthropological, economical and religious problems of this country. No wonder a series of books in this line were published<sup>1</sup>.

1. Maya Safari, Maya Gallop, Maya Oasis, From the Burning Sands, Chilly Sauce are some of the books in this category.

Fr. Vellilamthadam was a person deeply interested in the social teaching of the church. He had clear vision and understanding of what the church marked out in this line through the Encyclical Letters of the Popes. Social questions regarding workers, Labour, Management and other related issues drew his attention. His book on 'Man and Social Problems' is the outcome of his great interest in this area.

All his works bear ample testimony to the fact that Fr. Vellilamthadam was a powerful writer. Read any of his work, and the reader will be impressed by his indepth knowledge of the subject he deals with and his unshaking conviction on the matter under consideration. He has edited and authored a wide variety of books to his credit<sup>2</sup> and I am cock sure that they will continue to outlive him. He has also contributed many valuable articles to Christian Orient and other standard periodicals and journals. Forget the man you may but one can reconstruct his genius and vision from his powerful writings. Style is the man, we say. Undaunted and uncompromising he was where principles are at stake, where justice is denied, and where positive growth is obstructed and in all these places one can find his expressions turning vibrant and powerful—a prophetic tone! Sometimes even in the face of acute negative criticisms Fr. Thomas held his ground and wrote fearlessly, knowing well that he was speaking nothing but the truth. This is true whether it was about the dark and bright aspects of the Indian society, the third world problem, the planetarian domination, the freedom fighters of Thomas christians, the Latin connection of Indian catholicism, or any philosophical, theological and socio-political questions.

He was an ardent champion of the causes oriental and especially of his own church the Syro-Malabar Church. He told me once that a serious reading of Paremmakkal's Varthamanappusthakam, did really trigger in him a lot of thoughts about the present situation of our church in India. His thirst to know the history and identity of our church there after increased greatly. It was his great ambition as a true son of the Malabar church, to conscientize our people of our ancient heritage and the sad predicament in which we find our church today. Certainly he has succeeded in this attempt to a certain extent. This will be all the more clear when one thinks of the short span of life which Almighty God had graciously given him. His deep veneration and grateful feelings towards Mar Cariattil and Paremmakkal down to Fr. Placid CMI of happy memory are worth mentioning. His sense of deep satisfaction and joy at the hazardous endeavours that Paurastya Vidyapitham undertakes for our church was always keenly felt in his conversations.

The seminarians and the colleagues revere him as an excellent professor. Socratic method of teaching was to his best taste. This he mentions in his own work "Greek Wisdom". His classes were very lively. He was teaching subjects like History of Greek philosophy, Philosophy of Man, Theory of knowledge and Abnormal psychology. Students were made to think and learn rather than merely to store informations in memory. It is true that the beginners would find his classes a bit tough as they are compelled to think, but they continue to love his classes as they slowly get at it. Soon after they realize that the prize of wisdom is above rubies.

2. His works include, Man and Social Problems, Tomorrow's Society, Marcuse and Freud on civilization; Greek Wisdom; The Spectre of Being; Despair, Hope and Bliss; (Ed.), The Freedom Fighters of Thomas Christians (ed.) and several other books and articles.

His service mentality is widely acclaimed both by the professors and students. He never denies any service or help asked of him by others. He would even go to the extent of doing a service without being explicitly asked for it. I would think that it is here that his character best aligns with his priestly mission. To serve others was a pleasure for him and he did it in such a nice and sweet manner. It is to be remembered that his service branched off into different types, encouragements and help of different types: intellectual, educational, social, financial etc. So many students have developed their interest in reading serious books, writing articles, and going deep into the roots of our spiritual patrimony, after they came in contact with the charming personality of Fr. Vellilamthadam.

Fr. Vellilamthadam was always a cheerful person. This is a fact that any one would agree without any reservation. And he proved to be so to his last day. Even when he was suffering from serious back pain a couple of days before his death, this cheerful disposition never left him. He used to crack jokes as if nothing had happened to him and he was a person who knew how to take a joke well and laugh at himself. He was always willing to have fun at his own expense. Many of

his colleagues and friends have reaped such a rich harvest of his jolly good nature and loving attitude. He could not stop loving us, come what may in the world around us. He would be telling us in the words of W. H. Auden "I'll love you till the ocean is folded and hung up to dry/ And the seven stars go squawking/ Like geese about the sky.

Fr. Vellilamthadam enjoys a place of preeminence in the hearts of his students. The wisdom he has imparted and his example of hard work, serious study and realistic attitude to life and the love and genuine concern for his mother church and above all the poor and needy, would always be a source of inspiration for his friends and students. His cheerful spirit and sense of selfless service are good examples for all of us. To be always his good friends, let us continue to remember him in our prayers:

The Lord bless thee, and keep thee;

The Lord make his face shine upon thee

and be gracious unto thee:

The Lord lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace"

(Numbers 6: 24)

Fr. Sebastian Kalacherry

# The Malankara Catholic Church: Its Ecumenical Role

## Introduction

One of the most striking points in the Ecclesiology propounded by Vatican Council II, is its affirmation that the Church is a Communion<sup>1</sup>. It is on the basis of this sound ecclesiological vision that the various individual apostolic Churches are getting more and more aware of their own individuality and autonomy, without losing sight of the need of their essential communion and intimate union with the Holy Apostolic See of Rome.

In the past, especially after the great divisions in the Church, when the Catholic Church was practically consisting only of the Western Latin Church, this essential feature of Catholicity of the Church was dimly visible, though theologically defensible. Once the Movements of Re-union with the Apostolic See of Rome started, especially from the 16th and 17th centuries, and as the Apostolic Oriental Churches regained their ecclesial communion with the Apostolic Church of Rome, the Catholic face of the church was once again shining forth, which has highlighted the universality of the redeeming function of the Church.

In fact, it is the actual presence of the Western and Eastern Catholic Churches in the big Catholic Communion, presided over by the Bishop of the Apostolic See of Rome, that made this truth of Catholicity a real ecclesial experience. Against the back-

ground of this ecclesial experience articulated in the proclamations and teachings of the Vat. II Council, it is easy to study and evaluate the ecclesial position and mission of the various individual Churches in the Catholic Communion.

We focus our attention on the Malankara Catholic Church and its ecumenical role within the wider context of its ecclesial mission as an individual apostolic Church in the Catholic Communion.

The Malankara Catholic Church, is to be understood as part of the ancient Malankara Church, that traces its origin to the preaching of St. Thomas, the Apostle. Retaining its apostolicity and identity as an ecclesial community and regaining its communion with the Holy See of Rome, after its rupture in the 17th century, it has established itself as an individual Church in the Catholic Communion. During the past fiftyseven years of its communion in the Catholic Church, the Malankara Catholic Church could grow up considerably and establish its position as an Individual Church, regaining its vitality and spiritual strength. Growing as a Vigorous Christian Community, the Malankara Catholic Church at present consists of 3 Dioceses, about 300,000 Faithful, 800 churches and mission centres, 400 priests and about 900 Religious. As part of an ancient Christian Community of India, it is deeply rooted in the spiritual traditions and cultural

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1. Cf. Lumen Gentium: Nos. 23, 26, 28.

values of India. The Holy See of Rome has recognised it and acknowledged it as such and the present Holy Father has confirmed it: "In your persons I greet and embrace two individual Churches, unique in character two Churches witnessing to two ancient, distinct, yet complementary forms of oriental Christianity; two Churches rooted in the Indian soil and adapted to the Indian way of life, living in peace and harmony with their neighbours who are overwhelmingly of another religious tradition. It has been solemnly affirmed that the oriental Churches, "distinguished as they are by their venerable antiquity, are bright with that tradition which comes from the Apostles through the Fathers (OE. 1). And We know that you are linked to the Apostles through the living tradition of your Churches and through ecclesial reality that embodies it, notably, your liturgy, ecclesiastical discipline, and whole spiritual heritage. At the same time your ecclesial tradition forms part of the Indian reality and is inseparable from it"<sup>2</sup>.

#### Malankara Catholic Church and Ecumenism

The spirit of ecumenism that is pervading now all Christian Churches and communities, can be regarded as a special gift of God, bestowed on the divided Christianity. For, it is this spirit that has already become a forceful movement in the Church, that remedies at least in a small degree the scandal of division in the people of God.

To assess the role of the Malankara Catholic Church in ecumenism as its God-given task and special vocation, we need to have a deeper understanding of the nature and aim of the ecumenical movement and the goals of ecumenical activities.

Ecumenism is often mistaken for a complacent co-existence of different Christian Churches in their state of division and disunity or in their present positions that contradict each other. It is neither a discrete method of unification and absorption of local Churches on the basis of might and power, nor a risky method of dilution and compromise of one's faith. Some are suspicious of it as involving secret methods of proselytism and 'sheep-stealing'. At any rate, prejudices and apprehensions are so prevalent that the goal of ecumenism is vaguely grasped and the real ecumenical problems seldom discovered and discussed. In this context, therefore, a correct understanding of the nature and goal of the ecumenical movement is imperative and the need of a basic agreement called for, for further discussion on the role of the Malankara Catholic Church, for that matter of any Oriental Catholic Church, in the ecumenical movement of the Church.

#### The nature and goal of ecumenism

That christianity remains divided today is a painful fact, and even a most scandalous one, contradictory and detrimental to the very message of it. Efforts for reconciliation have unfortunately turned out to be causes for further division and estrangement. Closer study of the situation reveals that, apart from the doctrinal differences, prejudices and misunderstandings play a great role to keep the communities away from one another preventing them from closer contact and mutual acceptance. Finding themselves in this state of alienation and division, the Churches are getting more and more aware of the need for coming together, to understand each other, to share with each other the riches they possess as Christian communi-

2. Cf. The speech of Pope John Paul II, on the occasion of the 'Ad limina' visit of the Oriental Bishops of India, Dec. 16, 1985.

ties. This quest for universality is urging them to grow in the mystery of Christ, healing and restoring their traditions that might have been mutilated and damaged in the course of history, by way of sharing and dialogue. It is this common search for integrity and wholeness, that gave birth to the modern ecumenical movement. It is the mutual encounter between ecclesial traditions that have suffered distortion, the drawing together of separated brethren, the healing of communities that have been injured, the integration of all Christians in the 'Una Sancta'. Ecumenism, therefore, is a movement to restore unity among Churches and achieve universality of their heritage through dialogue mutual enrichment, acceptance of each other in each one's unique ecclesial reality and individuality. Ecumenism primarily envisages ecclesial communities and spiritual traditions and not individuals and immediate situations. Promotion of Christian Unity takes place on both levels, but the two aspects are clearly distinct, though not opposed. Vat. II Council places both of them in the same movement worked out and guided by the Holy Spirit.<sup>4</sup>

#### A basic agreement

All of us know what the ecumenical movement has in recent years brought about within the Church of Christ. It has helped us to come closer, dispel prejudices, understanding each other deeper and better. It has provided us with opportunities to worship and pray together experiencing at least in a small degree the underlying unity that keeps us together. We have learned to help each other out of love for Christ, discovering our common social responsibility. With ever more

enthusiasm and seriousness we have engaged in common and ecumenical studies to equip ourselves to find solutions of problems confronting the Church. Above all, amidst our growing experience of unity, we have learnt to identify our real disagreements and differences which keep us in a constant awareness that we have yet to go a long way, towards the unity we are all praying and craving for with great hope.

While we are willing to acknowledge the good results that have been brought about by the ecumenical movements, we have to admit that our ecumenical involvements are still limited and they are yet to be directed to the goal they ought to aim at or reach in due course.

It is common knowledge that even the most prominent organisations of the ecumenical movement are labouring under the pressure of inconsistencies and contradictions. Professor Zander speaks for the Orthodox Church; "The ecumenical problem thus paradoxically combines mutually exclusive principles and there seems to be no way out of it." Professor Edmund Schlink of the Evangelical Church in Germany has no hesitation to describe the W. C. C. as the most paradoxical organisation. While the W. C. C., he points out, is the fellowship of Churches which recognises our Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour and sets unity of all Christians and communion among the Churches as its goal, it has neither the power nor the machinery to make the member-Churches effectively attain it; while it suggests brotherly assistance to each other, it shrinks under its inability to call upon the member-Churches to lift the anathemas they have imposed upon each other."<sup>5</sup>

3. Cf. Bernard Lambert, *Ecumenism*, Herder, 1962, p. 32

4. U. R. No 4

5. Cf. Edmund Schlink, *The Coming Christ and the Coming Church*, London, 1967, p. 5

In other words, W. C. C. or any other organisation is justified in existing or living with these contradictions only if it tends to make progress towards the unity of its member Churches in which they can enjoy full communion in the Lord whose Will it is that they should meet Him as one Church and not divided.

The success and effectiveness of these organisations shall, therefore, be evaluated in terms of the goal of unity they purport to facilitate and promote. We do well if we keep on reminding ourselves that the goal of ecumenism is complete, full, unity of the People of God, bringing the Mystical Body of Christ to its perfect fulfilment by means of dialogue, co-operation, integration and by drawing Christians and their ecclesial communities together reconciling them and healing their damaged traditions.

#### Unity : God's Grace and our task

Assessing the inner reality of the Church and placing it existentially in the wider context of the redemptive plan of God, we find that the unity of the Church is not based on the work of its members. It is not the product of the members it joins together; rather the members are product of it, and it makes them one in itself and they cannot live as such unless they are all united to Him. Thus the Church exists more truly in Christ than it exists in the multiplicity of His members. The members of the Church are one because they have been chosen and called to be a people of one God; because they are all baptized and incorporated into the same Spirit; the underlying invisible principle of the unity of the Church is the Holy Spirit who is sent to His people by the Father through His only begotten Son. That is to say, the Church unity is springing forth from the inner life of the most Holy Trinity and it is based on the inten-

tionality of the single saving act of God. This ultimate unity and nothing less is what Christ desired for His Followers: "That they may be one, as we also are one" (Jn. 17:21).

This is, therefore, a sacred, supernatural unity, a fellowship given as a grace to be cherished and enjoyed by the People of God. That the source and principle of Christian unity is the unifying and vivifying Spirit given by the Father in His Son, does not leave those who are called upon to be His Church, free from their obligation to respond to the call of God. For, the unity God has given His Church is to be expressed in terms of a response realised through the cause of salvation history. Since we are created one, we ought to be one; since we are redeemed as a people of God by the Father in His son through the Spirit, we have to remain and appear as such. In other words, ours is not the task of creating the unity of the Church in Christ, but the Church must give expression to it in its actual life and mission. This is the great task confronting the Church on earth.

#### Aiming at a visible Unity

Fixing our starting point in our task of giving expression to our unity as the people of God constituted in Christ through the working of the Holy Spirit, we cannot forget to direct our ecumenical activities towards attaining a visible unity of the Church. For if we stop at the unity of the Church as verified and realised in our incorporation into Christ only, without laying sufficient stress on the need of expressing it in the concrete reality and life situations of the Church in the form of a visible unity, there is always the danger of ecclesiastical docetism and spiritualism.

The unity of the people of God is effected in accordance with the dispositions of God's salvific will and it is along the same lines of the

redemptive plan and work that it is expressed, enriched and completed. Hence it follows the law of incarnation. The Church is the continuation of the mystery of Christ, dynamically present in the world, through the members united to Him, in His Spirit. The manifestation of the power of the Spirit has to take visible forms. The Spirit being one impels us to be one not only invisibly and anonymously but also visibly and in recognisable forms. Hence the people of God as the Body of Christ is constituted as a visible fellowship in the Word, Sacraments and Orders. In fact this Body of Christ is formed in its basic expression by the participation in the Body of Christ in the Sacrament of the Eucharist, which has to be further manifested in the concrete forms of Christian life in the day-to-day life situation. A fellowship that is not recognisably both divine and human is no ecclesial fellowship at all. It follows that although the divine element is primary and creative in the Church the human element may not be left to chance.

Hence all Christian Churches tend to defend a visible unity as essential for the Church if it has to have any meaning as an effective sign and symbol of unity for the world.

The W. C. C. in its third general assembly held at New Delhi in 1961, explained this theme in its statement on unity: "we believe that the unity which is both God's Will and His gift to His Church is being made visible as all in each place who are baptised into Jesus Christ and confess Him as Lord and Saviour are brought by the Holy Spirit into one fully committed

fellowship, holding the one Apostolic faith, preaching the one Gospel, breaking the one bread, joining in common prayer, and having a corporate life reaching out in witness and service to all and who at the same time are united with the whole Christian fellowship in all places and all ages in such wise that ministry and members are accepted by all, and that all can act and speak together as occasion requires for the tasks to which God calls His people. It is for such unity that we believe we must pray and work."<sup>6</sup>

Taking a step further, in the fifth general assembly at Nairobi in 1975, the W. C. C. declared: "We believe that we are called to the goal of visible unity and have, therefore, struggled as previous assemblies have done, to describe more fully that goal....."<sup>7</sup>

A definite expression of the quest for visible unity can be seen in the 'Ten proposition for visible unity' advanced by the Churches' unity commission in England. The first two of the propositions run as follows: "1. We reaffirm our belief that the visible unity in life and mission of all Christ's people is the Will of God. 2. We, therefore, declare our willingness to join in a covenant actively to seek that visible unity."<sup>8</sup>

Already in the first preparatory meeting of this commission the Bishop of St. Edmundsbury pointed out why they insisted on the goal of visible unity: "We seek visible unity because only a united body of people realising their interdependence on each other and their dependence on Christ can so act ....."<sup>9</sup>

6. Cf. The New Delhi Report, London, 1962, p. 116

7. Cf. Nairobi Assembly of the W. C. C. (Ed. D. S. Amalorpavadas), Bangalore, 1976, p. 72

8. Cf. 'Churches' Unity Commission': The propositions, in 'One in Christ', Vol X II 1976, p. 209

9. Cf. *ibid*, p. 199.

It is, therefore, clear that all Churches, Catholic, Orthodox and Protestant, do really affirm and seek organic and visible Church-unity as the goal of all our ecumenical endeavours and encounters.

#### Two trends of conceiving this Church-unity

It may be asked if this unity be conceived as a unity achieved along the lines of a fulfilment and completion of the existing visible reality and unity of the Church (the classical view-point of the Catholic and Orthodox Churches, each identifying, of course, the existing visible unity as that of its own Church) or as a creation of an external unity for the invisible Church that exists above all the present Christian Communions (the general protestant view). This very difference of opinion itself is an ecumenical problem and, in fact, the most fundamental of all, which we cannot afford to be unaware of in our discussions.

#### The ecumenical movement promoted by the Malankara Catholic Church

Ecumenism being understood thus as a movement to promote Church Unity, we are in a position to assess the role of the Malankara Catholic Church in this regard. Starting from the very reunion event in 1930, the Malankara Catholic Church has responded to the divine call to Unity and has vigorously continued this process of promoting Christian unity both on the individual level and on the ecumenical level and according to the correct Catholic principles. Here we deal only with its ecumenical aspect. If we study closely the great Reunion event that took place in the Malankara Church in 1930 and the efforts for unity that preceded it and all that it has contributed to the ecclesial life and mission of the Church in general

and Malankara Church in particular, one cannot fail to understand that the Reunion event in 1930 and the Movement it has given birth were significant contributions to the ecumenical movement in our day.

#### The encounter and the mutual acceptance

Anyone who seriously studies the Reunion in 1930 in the Malankara Church will discover that the event was the crowning point of a continuous and active dialogue between the Malankara Church and the Apostolic See of Rome. Ever since the separation of the Malankara Church from the Catholic Communion, the former was making strenuous efforts to reestablish that communion, and accept the primacy of the Roman Pontiff safeguarding its individuality. During the course of this dialogue and discussions, the Holy See of Rome was gradually led to approve and accept the ecclesial identity of the Malankara Church having acknowledged its spiritual traditions and religious heritage. But only after three centuries of strenuous efforts for dialogue, all of which met with various degrees of failure, could this mutual acceptance be effected at least in principle<sup>10</sup>.

Sometimes the Reunion Event is badly understood or inadequately described as a return of repentant individuals to their paternal home. The Non-Catholics, especially those of the Malankara Church look down upon it as a betrayal and desertion of their mother Church perpetuated in favour of the Roman Church. But the Reunion Movement led by the late Mar Ivanios of Happy Memory, was neither a mere refuge to the paternal household nor a desertion of the maternal home surrendering it to any alien domination. That it was an ecclesial event and an ecclesial act, is

10. Cf. Cyril Malancharuvil, *The Syro-Malankara Church*, Alwaye, 1973 pp. 102-117.

clear from the history of the Reunion Movement.

In fact, the revolt in 1653, against the Portuguese Missionaries was an attempt to protect the ecclesial status, the rights, privileges and the autonomy of the apostolic Church in Malabar. In all the negotiations for a reconciliation after the rift, it was again these demands and claims for autonomy that came up for discussion which, unfortunately could not be settled amicably in the beginning<sup>11</sup>. The leaders of the Malankara Church insistently continued to claim for their autonomy and submitted that the Holy See of Rome should acknowledge the ecclesial status of the Malankara Church as one having inviolable rights based on their apostolic origin and traditions<sup>12</sup>. In the successful reunion in 1930, while the reuniting prelates of the Malankara Church accepted the primacy of the Pope, Bishop of Rome, he being the successor of St Peter in the Holy See of Rome, the Holy See readily acknowledged the ecclesial status of the Malankara Church and accepted its legitimate traditions and spiritual legacy as authentically christian and apostolic<sup>13</sup>.

This was therefore, an historic encounter between two apostolic Churches in which both were reconciled, healed and perfected in terms of fullness of communion and Catholicity. The ecclesial unity achieved by the Malankara Catholic Church through the Reunion event and Movement remains, perhaps, the only event of this century, in which ecumenism, or an ecumenical movement, has reached the goal it purports to achieve.

Accepting that the success of this

ecumenical movement is partial as several ecclesial communities of the Malankara Church are still reluctant to commit themselves to this mutual encounter and acceptance, we regret to note that the significance of this is still disregarded and it is not appreciated as a glorious stage of the achievement of the goal of ecumenism understood as the promotion of Church unity in Malankara. In fact, this sad situation itself is one of the ecumenical problems that confronts us.

#### Dialogue and sharing continues

By the emergence of the Malankara Catholic Church and its existence in the big Catholic Communion, the possibility of setting an ecclesial ground for real sharing and dialogue between the Catholic and Non-Catholic Churches was looming large. The Malankara Catholic Church provides a common forum for the Catholic Faith and the Malankara Traditions to meet. Rooted in the spiritual traditions of the ancient Malankara Church and at the same time enjoying the Catholic Communion, the Malankara Catholic Church paves the way for a deeper understanding between the Catholic and Non-Catholic communities. Through the reunited families, who are still closely related and acquainted with their non-catholic brethren, the latter gain ample possibilities to learn more about the Catholic Church giving them good opportunities to remove prejudices and expel misunderstandings. Similarly through the Malankara Catholic Church, the other Churches in the Catholic Communion, get a deeper knowledge and closer contact with the life and spiritual heritage of the

11. Cf. Guiseppe S. Maria, *Prima spedizione alla India Orientali*, Romae, 1666, pp 125-126.

12. Cf. Cyril Malancharuvil *op. cit.* pp. 102-117

13. Cf. *ibid* pp. 122-131

Apostolic Malankara Church. Thus placed within the Universal Church, the Malankara Catholic Church has to witness to the truth of diversity in unity among the Catholics, and being related to the Non-Catholic Malankara communities it has to be before them a persuasive testimonial and witness to the need of unity in diversity<sup>14</sup>. This role is most significant to the promotion of dialogue, mutual understanding and acceptance among the Churches envisaged in the ecumenical movement and its activities.

#### A process of healing and restoration of an ancient Church

If ecumenism is understood as a quest for universality and wholeness, as well as a process of healing and restoration, the Churches that have been alienated from other Churches and got impoverished by their division, shall have to be reconciled and healed by their entry into communion with each other.

The Church in Malankara because of its origin from the Apostle St. Thomas has been claiming the rights and privileges of an apostolic Church. In fact, the revolt in 1653, as we have already noted, was the result of a defence of this autonomy against the interference of the missionaries. But unfortunately this ended up in the loss of the communion with the Holy see of Rome and consequently the Catholic Communion. Thus the Malankara Church, in its state of being cut off from the full Catholic Communion, could not claim to be fully authentic in terms of its individuality as an apostolic Church and of its Catholicity as the Church of Christ. Hence its entry into the full communion with the Universal Church through its communion with

the Holy See of Rome was necessary to regain its role and position as an authentic, individual and apostolic Church in the one Church of Christ. This was regained, at least in partial fulfilment, when the Malankara community has accepted communion with the Catholic Church through the See of Rome, retaining its legitimate traditions and spiritual heritage and emerged as the Malankara Catholic Church. The existence of the Malankara Catholic Church in the Catholic Communion and the acceptance of it in that communion is the symbolic reality of the restoration of the ancient Malankara Church to its authentic ecclesial dignity and status of an apostolic local Church. This then is also a strong affirmation of the Vat. II Council's ecclesiology, which in fact was loudly proclaimed in anticipation in the reunion event in 1930, that each individual Church has its own right of being individual and autonomous as long as it remains in the Catholic Communion through its communion with the Roman Pontiff.

This, in turn, is a strong plea and a sure indication as to which direction the ecumenical movement should advance among the ecclesial communities of the Malankara Apostolic Church.

#### The Task ahead.

As it has been said earlier, the Malankara Catholic Church considers the promotion of Church unity as its special vocation and does involve itself in fulfilling this obligation. Evidently the teachings and directions given by the Council Vat. II in its Decree on Ecumenism remain the basic guidelines for this task.<sup>15</sup> A commentary on them is not attempted here. However, a particular point

14. Cf. C. A. Abraham, *Fifty years in the Bond of Catholic Unity*. Trivandrum, 1980, p. 7

15. Cf. U R ms. 111-V1

that may be more relevant in this regard may be mentioned.

**The hermeneutic principle of the unity of the Church:**

The Churches though agreed upon the need of unity, have not come to an agreement on what this unity should be and how it should be attained. This agreement, however, cannot be expected unless there should be an agreement on the concept of the Church itself. The meaning of the phrase 'One Church' depends mainly upon our conception of the church. For the meaning of the word 'One' depends upon the meaning of that which is one, and the quality of oneness varies according to the reality that must be one. Hence the kind of unity we envisage of the Church is predetermined by the kind of concept of the Church we have. That is to say, the hermeneutic principle of the unity of the Church to be achieved or expressed is the concept of the Church we explicitly or implicitly have. The hermeneutic principle of the concept of the Church, however, is determined by the particular outlook of the Church or the denomination we happen to belong to. A step further, on the philosophical plane, the concrete man of history as he lives his life is the hermeneutic principle of all human understanding. Thus our disagreement in the interpretation of the concept and unity of the Church may partly be remedied by our awareness of the manifold levels of this hermeneutical problem.

Each Church and denomination as well as the members belonging to that Church or denomination consciously or unconsciously entertain concept of the Church that in various degree differ from one another. Here is the hermeneutic problem of the ecumenical movement. This problem is acute not merely in a theoretical understanding of the Church. As the

current notion of the interdependence of theory and practice well shows, the hermeneutic problem in ecumenical movement is both theoretical and practical. As a result of this interdependence the problem of understanding, especially in the case of the quest for Church unity is multidimensional.

**Common Understanding of the Church needed.**

The solution to this impasse cannot be merely theoretical, nor can it be merely practical. Hence it should be sought along the lines of a gradual and painful reprisal and renewal of Christian life by all Churches and ecclesial groups. Only a converted man can work for unity. This is also true of the Churches. A renewed Church of the kind will have a concept of the Church that is more representative of the reality of the Church of Christ.

Along with this, a common understanding of the concept of the Church has to be sought after, not only in ecumenical study groups but also in the concrete life situation of the Churches. Only through the interaction between these two process of arriving at a common understanding of the church and living in it constantly renewed and reformed, the concrete forms of Church unity will be shaped and rendered relevant. Since both theory and practice are necessary to reveal our goal, the local Church, where the day to day life of the faithful is lived, is not merely a field of experiment for our theories. Our theories become genuine and effective only in the practice of day to day life of the vision enshrined in the theories. As a consequence of such practice the theory itself is tested, enlivened, proved and enriched, whereby a new vision and a new theory come to hand. Now progress is possible. Our goal becomes clearer and tied to

practice and living. Thus a new understanding of the church and of its unity as something to be achieved becomes clearer and credible.

This is a responsible task to be undertaken by the faithful under the guidance and direction of the Hierarchy as pointed out by the Council Vat II<sup>16</sup>. This is the 'Responsible risk' cautiously recommended by the W. C. C. that has to be taken by the individual churches with the necessity of 'Exerting Pressure on the limits of their own inherited traditions'<sup>17</sup>.

#### Particular traditions open to each other

Every Christian has received the Gospel message through the tradition of a particular Church and is incorporated by Baptism into the one Church within that particular tradition. These traditions, therefore, have their force and underlying influences as sources of confessional formulae and doctrinal tenets. Accepting, however, the fact of a divided christendom the understanding of our traditions can be broadened. A broadened understanding of our traditions naturally exerts pressure on the life situations we live in the church. As soon as these traditions are brought to life by making them relevant in actual conflict situations of christian life, we lose much of their power as reactionary forces in striving after unity. These traditions, therefore, can serve the cause of unity only to the extent of their ability to be open to each other and get enriched in terms of fulfilment and perfection. Hence in a true and genuine involvement in our quest for a visible unity of the Church of christ we have to exert pressure on our own inherited traditions in exchange of the greater values and gifts received in our pursuit after unity.

#### Dispositions required.

It is obvious that the taking of such steps can hardly leave our concepts and beliefs and existing church structure untouched, a salutary change and evolution that should be well received and accelerated.

It is against this background that both the Vat. II Council and the W. C. C. called for a change of heart as the basic condition for ecumenical dialogue worthy of its name insisting on the need of being open to the Spirit who leads us into this unity and who makes us capable of expressing it, in concrete forms of a true ecclesial life.

This alone will help us to examine and evaluate our unconscious and conscious presuppositions, be they dogmatic, philosophical or anthropological.

The W. C. C. has already foreseen the cost of this involvement in the pursuit of unity. "The achievement of unity will involve nothing less than a death and rebirth of many forms of church life as we have known them. We believe that nothing less costly can finally suffice"<sup>18</sup>.

#### Church Unity seen as the unity of redemption.

The unity of Christianity is the unity of a redemption which though worked out and inaugurated in Jesus Christ, has to be fully achieved by the people of God step by step through the death-resurrection pattern of life, Christ himself has willingly accepted from His Father.

Understanding Church unity in relation with the saving act of God manifest in the redemptive work of Jesus Christ has deep ecumenical

16. Cf. U R n l n. VII. n 10-12

17. Cf. New Delhi Report, p. 12.

18. Cf. *ibid* p. 117

significance. For this will enable us to interpret the picture of unity visualised for the Church more in keeping with a concept of the Church, that would be more acceptable to many of the Christian Churches and communities. There is a growing tendency to understand the Church as the dynamic presence of the Risen Lord in relationship with man or as the expression of Christ's continued unifying saving activity<sup>19</sup>. This conception of the Church, while safeguarding the continuity of the single saving intentionality of Christ brings into relief the reality of the saving act here and now, and consequently with the changes needed in the visible elements that constitute the Church's expressiveness. This gives room for arriving at a better, more relevant visible unity of the Church prayerfully hoped for by all. Consistent with the features of the saving act of God, the one Church then becomes all-embracing, (being the expression of the saving intentionality of Christ), necessarily unfulfilled (being situated in between the resurrection and parousia), demanding (being composed of the people of God entrusted with the duty of building up of the body of Christ to its mature measure) and destined for inevitable fulfilment (being assured by Christ<sup>20</sup>).

This sort of Church-unity does not imply simple uniformity of organisation, rite or expression, as the W. C. C. feared<sup>21</sup>, but there will be enough theological space for legitimate pluralism contributing to the fullest expression of the life of the Spirit.

An understanding of the Church and of its unity along these lines will cut a middle way between the two

positions one holding on to a once-for-all well-established one Church and the other gropingly waiting for the emergence of an ideal super Church.

### Conclusion

If the ecumenical movement has its goal the promotion of the unity of Churches by healing their mutilated traditions and enriching their impoverished spiritual patrimony through dialogue, encounter, reconciliation and mutual acceptance, with the emergence of the Malankara Catholic church a new chapter in the history of the ecumenical movement has been written down. For through the Reunion event in 1930, a wing of the old Christian community in Malankara has regained the Communion of the Catholic Church safeguarding its ecclesial identity. If it was the restoration of apostolic heritage and dignity of an apostolic Church on the part of the Malankara Church, it was a new encounter and dialogue with an apostolic Church on the part of the other individual Churches in communion with the Holy see of Rome. That the unity of the Catholic Church is expressed in the communion of individual Churches united with the Roman Pontiff and with the holy see of Rome is strongly and clearly brought into relief in the event of the reunion and continues to be affirmed by the Malankara Catholic Church. The existence of three rites in India promoting different ways of liturgical worship, theological thinking and pastoral practices, is a loud proclamation of this ecclesial vision. While the Malankara Catholic Church strongly defended that the ecclesial identity of every individual Church, based on its own individuality in terms of its liturgy,

19. Cf. Peter Chirico, ss.: "One Church: What does it mean?" in *Theological Studies*, 1967, pp. 659-682.

20. Cf. *ibid*, pp. 681-682.

21. Cf. New Delhi Report, p. 117.

discipline, spiritual patrimony and cultural heritage, is to be safeguarded as an ecclesial treasure, it has clearly proved that the authenticity of these individual Churches is rooted in their communion with the supreme pastor in the Holy See of Rome, he being the successor of Peter, the Head of the Apostles and Vicar of Christ in His Church. Within the Catholic communion the Malankara Catholic Church has to witness to the truth of the Catholicity of the Church of Christ and in its relationship with the non-Catholic Malankara communities it has to affirm the need of communion among the Churches. In other words, making it possible for the Churches, especially the different ecclesial communities of the Malankara Church, agree on the concept and reality of the Church, not only in theory but also in practice, is the great ecumenical task of the Malankara Catholic Church. The overcoming of the theoretical and practical difficulties involved in this task is itself the ecumenical problem that confronts us. And yet we should remember that the solution of this problem and the achievement of the unity of the Churches will only effectively proclaim the truth that God has redeemed His people in Jesus Christ uniting them in His Holy Spirit. Looking forward

to our ecumenical role, we should be aware that the search for a visible organic unity of the Church of Christ that remains divided in the world by the sinfulness of man, can be made fruitful and effective only by genuine ecumenical dialogue among the Churches fully open to the guidance of the Spirit, the source of our unity. As we visualise the unity of the Church in accordance with our concept of the Church, our discussions on Church unity will bear no fruit if we don't and cannot agree on a common concept of the Church. The common understanding of the Church is not the result of a mere theoretical reasoning nor of mere compromising practices. It should be formed both in ecumenical studies and in authentic ecclesial life to have any ecumenical significance. The authenticity of the emerging new concept of the Church and of its unity will be based on the reality of the Christian life, constantly renewed and reformed in the ecclesial community. The pattern followed in this process must be the 'Death-Resurrection' pattern of the redemptive work of Christ. The achievement of unity then becomes the appropriation of the grace of salvation and the gift of redemption we have been granted by God in Christ through His Spirit.

Metropolitan Cyril Mar Baselios

# Holy Father's Letter to the Bishops of India-A Response

## 1. Introduction

The letter of His Holiness Pope John Paul II issued from the Vatican on 28 May 1987 "to my venerable Brothers the Bishops of India", is indeed an epoch-making event in the history of Christianity in India. As desired by the Holy Father let us hope and pray "that it will be given the full support of all the Bishops of the country", and all our "priests, religious and faithful... accept and co-operate fully in its implementation."

The Syro-Malabar Church has special reason for thanking the Lord and for rejoicing, for this historic intervention of the Holy Father has opened up new avenues for its growth. An attempt is made in this article to respond to the letter point by point, to bring out certain nuances, and comment on certain points the Holy Father has specifically stated, and certain others he has left out without a mention.

In the introductory paragraph of the letter the Holy Father mentions the study that has been going on "with regard to the inter-ritual questions which have arisen in India in recent years". Inter-ritual questions have arisen in India not in recent times but ever since the Latin missionaries came to India, and specifically from 1599 when the so called Synod of Diamper inaugurated a systematic process of latinising and sub-

jugating the Church of the St. Thomas Christians. This letter has a wider and more historic significance than it purports to have: it corrects many an aberration in inter-Church relations and Catholic communion that has existed in India from the introduction of Western Christianity in India until today.

The Holy Father goes on to refer to the promise he made to the bishops of India during his pastoral visit to India in February 1986, that he "would do everything possible to ensure a just and fair settlement of the issues, one that would take into account all the pastoral exigencies of unity and truth". It should be frankly admitted that few people in India then thought this issue would be resolved in so short a time. Experts in Oriental Church affairs seriously doubted whether the present Pope would ever give a just solution to this question. It should be stated to the credit of the Holy Father that he has kept his promise, and that too so felicitously. By this he has won the everlasting gratitude of Orientals not only in India, but all over the world, because this letter would be a trend-setter in inter-church relations all over the world.

## 2. The Pontifical Commission

The letter gives the impression that the appointment of the pontifical commission followed immediately after the promise the Pope made to the bishops of India in February 1986.

But in between there was the special synod of Bishops in Rome convened by the Holy Father to evaluate the implementation of the decisions of the Second Vatican Council. At the Bishop's Synod the three Oriental Archbishops of India in a series of very effective interventions made it home to the synod fathers that the decisions of the council with regard to inter-ritual relations had not been implemented in India even after twenty five years. Their speeches received wide coverage and favourable comments from the Italian press. The representatives of the bishops' conferences all over the world evinced great concern over the plight of the Orientals in India. It was under such circumstances that the Holy Father announced to the Synod fathers his decision to appoint the pontifical commission.

Considering the composition of the pontifical commission, (Cardinal Secretary of State being its president and the Cardinal prefects of two Roman congregations being among its members), we learn that such a high-ranking pontifical commission has not been appointed over nearly 300 years. After the Holy Father announced the composition of the pontifical commission, something rather improper happened; when a C. B. C. I. meeting was in session, the Latin bishops of India had a meeting of their own and resolved unanimously to request the Holy Father that Archbishop Henry D'Souza also must be appointed member of the Pontifical Commission. This was done. When the Holy Father described the composition of the pontifical commission Archbishop Henry D'Souza was not mentioned by name but included in "and others". Whatever we might think about the propriety of such procedure, we should rejoice because the Latin bishops have now no grounds to complain that their chief spokesman was not heard by the pontifical commission.

The letter gives a very long description of the composition, procedure, and working of the pontifical commission but does not say anything about its conclusions, proposals or recommendations, or how these are related to the pastoral instructions given by the Holy Father in the letter. The Holy Father states that the commission considered the pastoral, historical, theological and canonical aspects of the issue and the "wealth of conciliar teaching was given an eminent place". We may safely presume that the findings of the 'study' (this word is used three times with reference to the work of the commission) by the commission were in general accepted by the Holy Father and incorporated in the letter.

### 3. Apostolic Visitor

We have seen how the letter makes no mention of the special bishops' synod; but it makes a more serious omission: there is no mention of appointment of Archbishop Antony Padiyara as Apostolic Visitor of the Syro-Malabar Catholics residing outside their territory or the report submitted by him. The appointment was by Pope John Paul I and the report was submitted to the present Pope. This is too important a matter to be omitted without serious reasons.

This omission is all the more surprising, because, from what we know of the Apostolic Visitor's report and his recommendations, this falls in line with "the study" made by the Pontifical commission and the pastoral instructions given by the Holy Father in the letter. What would have prompted the Holy Father to totally neglect the report of the Apostolic Visitor, in which he would have found new grounds for his pastoral instructions?

We can arrive at only one reason: the Holy Father wanted his

pastoral instructions to be acceptable especially to the Latin bishops of India who, he knew, had serious reservations about the findings and recommendations of the Apostolic Visitor. Nothing would be lost, and much could be gained, by playing down those things repugnant to the Latin bishops of India. We can only appreciate the pastoral sensitivity of the Holy Father.

#### 4. St. Thomas Christians

Section 2 of the letter is a historical note on the origin and evolution of Christianity in India. The first paragraph is about "a considerable community of Christians, known as St. Thomas Christians". This is a very guarded statement: this community has existed "since very ancient times", not from apostolic times; "in southern India", not all over India. This is also true of their connection with St. Thomas the Apostle: it is "a very strong tradition" that he "visited and laboured in India, both in the extreme south and what is known today as the Madras-Mylapore area". The reference to the tomb is all the more cautious: "There is even a tomb in Mylapore which is venerated as his resting place".

The Holy Father does recognize the St. Thomas tradition of the Orientals of India, but not to the extent to which they ascribe it, or even to the extent to which earlier popes, like Pius XII had gone. By limiting them to "Southern India", their claims over the whole of India (Kollahendo), is not recognised. What the Pope does state here should be welcome to the Orientals in India, though they may have a complaint that he has not fully understood their Christian origins.

It is gratifying to note that the Holy Father mentions the arrival of

"groups of Christians from the Middle East, later on, at various times", so that there was "the Church in India" before their arrival, which was "strengthened" by them, and they "became assimilated into the Church already there."

#### 5. Latin Missionaries

The second paragraph of section 2 of the letter is about the arrival of the Latin missionaries from "the thirteenth century" and about the "missionary activity" "process of evangelization" till "recent years". It may be a little surprising to note that the Holy Father does not mention Western Christianity in India as an addition to the Eastern Church that already existed: there was "the Church in India", "the Church already there", before the arrival of the Latin missionaries.

The result of the "coming of the Latin missionaries" was that "the missionary activity of the Church began to extend". The letter does not state that the St. Thomas Christians did not have any missionary activity before the arrival of the Latin missionaries; but it does state that it was expanded only after their arrival. The letter gives a graphic picture of the expansion of the missionary activity: from Calicut to Cochin, from Cochin to Goa, then throughout the present day India, and finally to areas which today are themselves independent neighbouring countries.

#### 6. Generous collaboration

The last part of the second section of the letter is a glowing tribute to the generous collaboration of the Syro-Malabarians in this process of evangelisation. This had two phases. The first phase, which "has always existed", was on an individual basis, "on the part of priests, religious and laity baptized in the Syro Malabar Rite".

The letter does not state that this "generous collaboration" meant that these priests, religious and laity had to renounce their ritual identity, put on Latin ritual identity, and work in Latin dioceses. Of course there was "generous collaboration", but this was necessitated by unjust inter-ritual relations, and the division of the whole of India and Latin Dioceses and the limiting of the Syro-Malabar Church into 04% of the territory of India. The Holy Father does not mention such uncomfortable historical facts.

The second phase of the "generous collaboration" in the process of evangelization has been on the part of the "Syro-Malabar Church itself in certain areas of the north". Here "generous collaboration" has been on the side of Latin bishops too because it was bishops like Archbishop Eugene D'Souza who took the initiative in carving out of Latin Diocese territories for the Syro-Malabar Church for evangelization.

The Holy Father says that "This collaboration should not be forgotten", and praises all for upholding the age-old adage: "salus animarum suprema lex". He makes no mention of the unjust inter-church relations existing in India for centuries, but courageously goes on to change the situation radically.

### 7. The Second Vatican Council

The Holy Father has already stated in section 1 that in the study of the pontifical commission, "the wealth of the conciliar teaching was given an eminent place". In section 3 of the letter the Holy Father quotes the relevant articles from the Decree "Christus Dominus" on the pastoral Office of the Bishops in the Church and the Decree "Orientalium Ecclesiarum" on the Catholic Eastern Churches, and states that the provisions contained in these Decrees apply to India.

It is to be noted that in this letter the Holy Father does not develop any new principles or norms with regard to inter-ritual relations: he merely states that the principles and norms established twenty five years ago by the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council should be applied in India. It is everybody's knowledge that these norms have not been implemented in India by the resistance of the Latin bishops who held the view that these norms did not apply to India. The Holy Father is here demolishing the position held hitherto by the Latin bishops.

As usual the Holy Father does not condemn the Latin bishops who have been misusing their pastoral office. It is to be noted that in the Bombay-Pune area where the Holy Father considers the presently existing situation as mature for the establishment now of an Eparchy of the Syro-Malabar Rite, not even a parish has been established for Syro-Malabarians by the Latin bishops concerned. In this regard no individual bishop is to be blamed, because they have been following a common understanding and policy.

We cannot fail to note that the Holy Father is speaking here in terms of "desire" on the part of Orientals in general, and that of the Syro-Malabarians in particular, and not in terms of their "right" as an individual Church in the Catholic communion. He does not speak in the language of the Code of Canon Law for the Latin Church which among "the obligations and rights of all Christ's faithful" includes the following in canon 214: Christ's faithful have the right to worship God according to the provisions of their own rite approved by the lawful pastors of the Church; they also have right to follow their own form of spiritual life, provided it is in accord with Church teaching". The Syro-Malabarians residing within Latin

Dioceses have been systematically denied this basic right. Hence it is not merely a matter of fulfilling of a "desire", but redressing an injustice. The Holy Father, however, uses the pastoral style of reconciliation and this can only be respected.

### 8. Variety in Unity

Section 4 of the letter is devoted by the Holy Father in demolishing another strategic position hitherto held by the Latin bishops in India in clear violation of the teaching of the Second Vatican Council in the Decree on the Catholic Churches in article 2, that multiplicity of rites in a country like in India would only destroy the unity of the Church. The argument in defence of variety of rites in the unity of catholic communion is given in language that would not offend the Latin bishops.

### 9. Episcopal Bodies

In section 5 of the letter the Holy Father lays down three norms and makes an announcement. Hitherto the national bishops' conference of India which is a statutory body in accordance with the canon law for the Latin Church, has been virtually functioning as an episcopal body for the entire Catholic Church in India. According to Canon 450 only Latin bishops would be properly members of the Episcopal conference, the Oriental bishops may be invited and may have only consultative vote.

The Latin bishops of India pleaded for a change in this provision before the canon law was enacted, and once it was enacted, it petitioned exemption for India. Neither was granted by the Holy Father. Now the three individual churches will have their own episcopal bodies to deal with ritual matters, and the National Conference of all the Catholic bishops will continue for questions of common

concern and of a national and supra-ritual character.

The Holy Father speaks of "episcopal bodies"; hence it is open for the Syro-Malabar Church, and also the Syro-Malankara Church, to have a permanent Synod with at least a Major Archbishop to preside over it. This, of course, would depend on the provisions of the much awaited code of canon law for the Oriental Churches.

### 10. Evangelisation

A very real grievance of the Orientals in India has been the denial of the right to evangelise without denying their Rite. The Holy Father seems to propose a re-distribution of areas for missionary activity among the three churches in India. This task is left to the Catholic bishops of India and the Holy Father lays down no norms except that it should "promote an evangelisation that will be truly effective and yet avoid all dangers of confusion and spirit of rivalry."

Let us hope and pray that the Latin bishops would give up the dog in the manger policy hitherto followed; similarly, the oriental bishops would have to be more open to the demands of inculturation and an incarnational approach to evangelisation. I wish the Holy Father had been more specific in this regard.

### 11. Orientals in Latin Dioceses

Finally the Holy Father re-iterates the conciliar decrees for the pastoral care of the Orientals living in Latin Rite dioceses. Here three things are made clear (1) The pastoral care of Orientals living in Latin dioceses rests with the Latin Ordinary; he has jurisdiction over them, until a proper hierarchy is established for them. It would not be proper, therefore, for Orientals or their bishops to defy this authority, as is alleged to be

done in places like Delhi. Orientals may have to correct themselves in this regard.

(2) Latin Bishops have pastoral care, jurisdiction, over Orientals residing in their dioceses not for Latinising them and eventually assimilating and integrating them into the respective parish/diocese but for preserving them in their proper ritual identity. In this respect the Latin bishops have to undergo a real conversion of heart and provide as soon as possible for an adequate pastoral care of Orientals, as required by the Holy Father.

"A priest of the Eastern Rite" would not mean merely a priest baptized in the Eastern Rite, but trained and ordained to work in a Latin Diocese. The proposed ministry for Orientals could be properly done only by priests trained and ordained for the respective Eastern Rite.

The Holy Father leaves the implementation of this instruction to the good will of the bishops. There is no reason to think that this hope is misplaced. In case some bishop fails to do so, who has to take up the cause? The faithful themselves. Also the president of the episcopal body of the respective Eastern Church. This aspect is left vague.

(3) The so called "single juris-

diction", "one territory, one bishop theory" is rejected by the Holy Father. In the same territory bishops of several rites can have jurisdiction. Hence the significance of the proposed establishment of Syro-Malabar Eparchy in Bombay-Pune Region. Once the principle is established, it can be used whenever necessary. The Holy Father lays down the procedure for this.

## 12. Conclusion

The concluding sixth section is a moving appeal by the Holy Father for unity and communion among the three individual churches in India. It borders on the mystical when the Pope asks his dear Brothers in the episcopate "to continue to reflect on the marvellous mystery of the Universal Church and all the Churches or Rites which make up her variety in unity."

This letter of Holy Father should begin a new era in the history of the Catholic Church in India, a new era of inner growth and collaboration, of evangelisation and ecumenism, at the service of the kingdom of God in our dear country. Neither Latins nor Orientals have reason to feel elated or let down. Let us walk faithfully in the path marked out by the supreme pastor of the Universal Church.

Fr. Sebastian Poonoly C.M.I.

Calicut.

## A Chart for De-latinisation

"Circular Letter Concerning Studies of the Oriental Churches" issued by William Card. Baum, Prefect, Congregation for Catholic Education, dated 6 January 1987 and published in *L'Osservatore Romano* (English edition) on 6 April 1987, is a clear document indicating the process of de-latinisation of the entire Catholic Church. It does not take long to read the Circular Letter but it takes considerably more time to understand its ecclesial impact. There are three areas in which the de-latinisation process is urgently indicated:

1) In the Circular Letter special mention is made with regard to the Eastern studies in theological training: "In seminaries and theological faculties, courses should be made available to the students on the fundamental notions regarding the Eastern Churches, their theological ideas, their liturgical and spiritual traditions ... The students should recognize and come to understand the liturgical and cultural diversity among the Eastern Catholic Churches" (n.10). Thus the students of the future Church should possess a better perspective in this regard. The Circular Letter makes the real problem of the latins explicit when it adds: "How much is known of the liturgical and spiritual life of the ancient Christian traditions?" (n.2). The ignorance is mainly because of the religious and clerical formation which follow the latin pattern. In fact in this regard

the Circular Letter reminds the *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, n. 17.

2) The Circular Letter realistically mentions that "a complete response... would require action by a number of Departments of the Holy See" (n. 8). It is clear that the Letter affirming the above-mentioned bold statement has in mind the not very enviable (past and present) situation prevalent in many departments, especially in the Congregation for Oriental Churches. This Congregation appears in practice a latin Congregation for the Oriental Churches. It is a well known historical fact that this congregation has often been run by individuals who are not particularly oriental. Moreover, it is a sad fact that no qualified member of the ancient Thomas Christians of India except Rev. Fr. Placid J. Podipara has ever been given an important role to play in the decision making process of this Congregation.

In order to remedy this situation, those who will be called to serve the Congregation for Oriental Churches (from top to bottom) should be given a prior training in Eastern theological heritage. *Nemo dat quod non habet!* Till now, many of the responsible persons were seen to be ignorant of the Eastern heritage.

There would be no better way of doing so than by ensuring, to the

conviction and satisfaction of Orientals especially of the Thomas Christians of India, than a vigorous follow up on actions begun by Cardinal Rubin till 1985. At present the general impression is that delay in enforcing the important decisions of the Holy Sec is made to please the latins and the latinised leaders of the Oriental Churches in India. While reviving the universal Church is a long-term job, re-activating the Congregation for the Oriental Churches is not. The hard lesson to learn is that it is better to train leaders in the Church. We hope that the Pope as a wise ruler will see that no anti-oriental priest be promoted to episcopacy (in the latin as well as Oriental Churches) or to the offices of the Roman Curia.

3) The Letter finally mentions the diocesan Offices and centres of pastoral guidance. Diocesan curia is the administrative centre of the whole diocese. Therefore those who are in charge of the administration should be qualified in the heritage of Eastern Churches. Their ignorance may adversely affect the pastoral life of the entire diocese.

#### Conclusion

The totality of the new policies may transform the mood from confrontation and tension to reconciliation and relaxed relationships in

the Catholic Church. The thrust of management in the latinised universal Church would now change from perpetual "*ad hocism*" which many latins preferred because it made everything so easy to manipulate, to long-term policy perspectives in some key areas. Now what as needed stands clearly: to undo the wrong-doings of the latin Church since many centuries. With this letter, expressing its keenness to re-instate studies of Oriental matters in all seminaries, universities and training centres, a solution might be found in the current confusion. Even if some of the guidelines will not be digested by the latins, it was to be expected. The Circular Letter is the first of its kind. The aim of the Letter is not at issue. The issue is neither how many latin seminaries will adopt it nor how many latins will read it. The important thing is that it happened at all. The Letter is going to lead to better relations between the different heritages, if not immediately then certainly in the future. It is a first step towards breaking the deadlock and it is a sure step towards a better understanding between the Eastern Churches and the latin Church. It will also undoubtedly pave the way for a long term policy in the area of priestly training and catholic education.

Thomas Vellilamthadam

# St James' Anaphora: An Ecumenical Locus A Survey of the Origin and Development of St. James' Anaphora

In India and abroad Syrian Christian communities, following the liturgical tradition of the Jerusalem - Antioch Liturgy of St. James, the brother of our Lord, superpose themselves in one and the same territory. They hold their allegiance and membership to different theological beliefs. And the variance in theological beliefs too is of variant degrees. Corresponding mutilation in the Syriac text of the Liturgy is only minimum. These Christians belong to the following Syrian Churches: the Malankara catholic, the Jacobite, the Orthodox, the Marthomite, the Thozhiyoor, and outside India are the Antiochene Catholic and Orthodox Churches. All these Churches belong to the one Syrian church. Thus many hundreds of thousands of christian believers worship God and celebrate their salvation in Christ in the universal church according to the Jerusalem-Antiochene Liturgy of St. James.

All of the above said Christians of different Churches of the Syrian tradition are proud of preserving and fostering the very precious and very antique anaphora of St. James. This anaphora is the foundation, prototype and mother of all the subsequent anaphoras, which number more than one hundred, of the Antiochene tradition, for their structure and tenor.

The Jerusalem-Antiochene origin of St. James' anaphora is the basis for the numerous elements in common with other Syriac anaphoras. From this point of view also St. James' anaphora is of great ecumenical importance.

## Relation with St. James

All the churches, which have inherited the syriac tradition, acknowledge that the anaphora under our discussion took its origin, at least in its basic structure, from St. James, the brother of our Lord. This age-old faith and mentality of the Syriac Church is eloquently expressed by Bar Salibi (+1173)

"On Wednesday, James, the brother of the Lord, celebrated the Qurobo (Liturgy) which has his name the beginning of which being "God and Lord of all". And being asked wherefrom he had taken it, he replied, "God is living, and I neither added nor left out anything of what I heard from the Lord. This is why this is the primitive and first liturgy."<sup>1</sup>

There are a good number of Syriac witnesses, who believe that the Liturgy of James the apostle and brother of the Lord proceeds from the very senacle where Jesus celebrated his Last supper with the disciples.<sup>2</sup> On

1. H. LABOURT, Dionysius Bar Salibi, *Expositio Liturgiae* (CSCO-14) Louvain, 1903, pp. 392-393.

2. Cfr. E. J. MOUNAYER, "The Eucharistic Liturgy of the Syrian Church of Antioch" in J. MADEY (ed), *The Eucharistic Liturgy of the Christian East*, Paderborn - Kottayam, 1982, pp. 73-74.

the first Wednesday after Pentecost the Malankara Church celebrates the anniversary of the First Eucharistic Celebration by St. James. This is an ancient practice of the Syriac Church. The Universal Church recognizes and teaches through the sixth and the seventh Ecumenical Councils (Constantinople III, 680-1 and Nicea II, 787) that James, the Brother of our Lord himself, is the author of the anaphora known in his name. Though the above-quoted words of Bar Salibi shall not be taken literally, the Greek and Syriac writers are almost unanimous to ascribe to the authorship of St. James' anaphora to James.<sup>3</sup>

Very ancient tradition witnesses that this James was an ardent lover of worship and prayer.<sup>4</sup> He was the first bishop of Jerusalem.<sup>5</sup> Certain points seem to argue strongly for our case. The final word at Jerusalem council was of James (Acts 15). Paul, at his last trip to Jerusalem, was taken by the brethren to James, in whose presence all the elders too gathered (Gal, 1:19; Acts 21:16-18).<sup>6</sup> James' favouritism towards Jewish Christians reflected in the New Testament epistle also could be brought into the same line. James' relation with Jerusalem as its first bishop confirms the possibility of the Jerusalem origin and foundation of the anaphora in his name from himself.

No written document of the original Jerusalem form of St. James' anaphora has reached us. The earliest manuscript available at present is of the ninth or tenth century (and it is of the much developed form). However, it is believed to be reflected partially in the Mystagogical Catecheses of St. Cyril of Jerusalem,<sup>7</sup> and of Theodore of Mopsuestia,<sup>8</sup> in the Clementine Liturgy of the Apostolic Constitution - an important document of the fourth century, and in the sermons of John Chrysostom. These witness to the fact that already in the fourth century St. James' anaphora existed in written form in Churches from where these witnesses arise. The anaphora of St. Basil (Byzantine Liturgy) also may help to rediscover the original Anaphora of St. James, since St. Basil probably formulated his Anaphora by shortening the Minor Anaphora of St. James. The Minor Anaphora of St. James possibly can claim more closeness to the ancient Liturgy of Jerusalem<sup>9</sup> than the longer Anaphora of St. James.

#### Jerusalem origin: Aramaic and Greek Forms

Modern liturgists generally agree to the origin of St. James' anaphora from Jerusalem.<sup>10</sup> However, the date of its redaction is disputed, though its apostolic origin in its constitutive elements is beyond doubt. The New

3. Cfr. *Ibid.*

4. Cfr. HEGESIPPUS, (Fragments of) "Five Books of Commentaries on the Acts of the Church" in *Ante-Nicene Fathers* Vol. VII, Michigan, p. 762ff.

5. Cfr. EUSEBIUS, *Hist. Eccl.* 11, 1: IV,3; CYRIL of Jerusalem, *Myst. Cat.* IV, 28; *Apostolic Constitution*, VII, 4, 4b; Constantinople III, Canon 32.

6. This is one of the points on which both Luke (Acts) and Paul agree perfectly.

7. Cfr. *Myst.* IV, 1; V, 4. 8. 9

8. Cfr. *Homilies*, 15 and 16

9. Cfr. E. SKAF, "The Holy and Divine Liturgy of the Melkite Greek Catholic Church", in J. MADEY (ed), *Eucharistic Liturgy in the Christian East*, pp. 281-2.

10. Cfr. E. J. MOUNAYER, *art. cit.*, p. 74

Testament history of the first Christian community of Jerusalem tells us that the first Church of Jerusalem gave birth to Syriac and Greek versions of St. James' anaphora. The earliest Christian community of Jerusalem, formed immediately after the Jerusalem pentecost experience in the first half of the first century, laid much emphasis on worship (Act 2, 42). There were very dynamic worshipping congregations. These were composed of the Jerusalem Jewish Christians who spoke Aramaic and the Hellenistic Christians who spoke Greek (Act 6, 1-7).<sup>11</sup> By A. D 31/32 these groups parted to separate worship.<sup>12</sup> Thus already in the beginning of the third part of the first half of the first century the Jerusalem church of St. James celebrated the Eucharistic liturgy in two languages - Aramaic and Greek. This must also imply some variance in theology as is reflected in the sermon of Stephen (Act 6,8-7,53). It resounds in Hellenistic theology (cfr. also Acts 9,28-29).

#### To Antioch

The linguistic dualism in the worship of the pre-midfirst century Christian groups of Jerusalem Church was providential in the development of the Word of God and of the Jerusalem-Liturgy of St. James. After the martyrdom of Stephen (Ca A. D. 32 or 33) the Greek-Christian community of Jerusalem was persecuted and it scattered (Acts 8,1.4). And the Christians went about preaching the Word (Acts 8,4). They preached first in the semi-Jewish Samaria, and then in the coastal regions of Palestine

and Phoenicia and thereafter in the Syrian cities of Damascus and Antioch (Ca. A. D. 33 or 35)<sup>13</sup> (Acts 11, 19-20). Those Messianists in Antioch soon grew into a very strong Church. And they preached the Christian Gospel very boldly. The new religious message was received both by Jews and non-Jews (Acts 11,19-21). About this happy eventuality Luke would say: "And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number that believed turned to the Lord" (Acts 11,21). The Church of Antioch was universalist: consisting of Jewish and non-Jewish 'converts'. The news of the growth of the Word and the consequent development of the Church in Antioch reached the Jerusalem Church, headed by apostles. Jerusalem Church sent Barnabas to Antioch, who on his arrival marvelled and rejoiced at the grace of the Lord, and confirmed them to remain steadfast in faithfulness (Acts 11,22-23). Barnabas' work, replete with the Holy Spirit, too added a great number to the community of disciples of Jesus. Later Barnabas and Paul lived there for a whole year and partook in the church gatherings and taught many more people (Acts 11,26). Peter also came to Antioch (Gal 2,11). The universalist Church of Antioch was confirmed and strengthened by the chief of the apostles and Paul and Barnabas. To the members of the Antiochene mixed community of the believers of the Lord the outsiders gave the name "christianoï" (Acts 11,26). This shows that the new community was seen by the outsiders "as a relatively independent group over against the synagogue".<sup>14</sup> They forsook the tradition

11. Cfr. M. HENGEL, *Between Jesus and Paul*, London, 1983, pp. 1-17; J. A. FITZMYER, "Jewish Christianity in Acts in the light of Qumran Scrolls", in L. KECK - MARTYR (eds), *Studies in Luke-Acts*, London, 1968, p. 237.

12. Cfr. M. HENGEL, *op. cit.*, pp. 42, 54-55

13. Cfr. M. HENGEL, *op. cit.*, pp. 16-17, 42

14. M. HENGEL, *op. cit.*, p. 43

of sabbath observance and began observing "the Lord's day".<sup>15</sup> The identification "Christanoi" sheds light also on the character of the worship of this new community. The allegation of cannibalism also goes hand in hand with the new name. The "christanoi" received the Body and Blood of Christ in worship. Besides, the new name contains also the idea that they are a community that worshipped under the leadership of bishop, because without a bishop there is no worship.<sup>16</sup> It needs no high imaginative power to assume that the form of the communal worship of the original Antiochene *Christanoi* could nothing but be what their founders inherited and took with them from Jerusalem, though contextual improvements by adaptation are not impossible. Naturally, it must be the Greek version of the original Jerusalem form that served as the foundation. But to dream of too much difference between the Jerusalem Syriae and Greek forms may console only the dreamer!

Is it possible to assume that around the middle of the first century itself there existed in Antioch a definite form of worship? A positive answer seems quite reasonable. The earliest written document about the Eucharist is that of Paul (1 Cor 11,

23-26). The Pauline Formula is Antiochene.<sup>17</sup> The Lucan form too is similar to the Pauline (though there are linguistic differences) and is Antiochene. Luke's familiarity with the Antiochene Church corroborates this case (Acts 11.19,13.1-3; 15.1-5, 22-35). Both the authors have taken the formula that was used in the Antiochene liturgical tradition. All the while the Lucan form contains a tradition more primitive than the pauline<sup>18</sup> and to allot priority to the tradition behind Mark or Luke is a difficult task, though the needle swings more towards Luke.<sup>19</sup> Luke's special presentation of the Eucharistic narration as Jesus' Last Meal and its characterization as the *Pasch* and the Hebraism of the language may indicate the Jerusalem origin of the tradition, because "there is no reason why tradition should not go back to the Jewish-Christian community of the first years, when the expectation of the kingdom was high".<sup>20</sup> The incensing of which Luke speaks (in Lk 1, 5-10) also could be an element of the Antiochene primitive Christian worship which itself must come from the proto-Christian worship of the Jewish-Christians of the first years. The prayer of the veil (*sūsōpo*) and depiction of the Holy Spirit in

15. Cfr. Rev. 1,10; Acts 29, 7; 1 Cor 16,2; IGNATIUS OF ANTIOCH, *Magnasians*, 9,1;
16. See that Ignatius of Antioch repeats this idea, e. g., *Trallians*, 2,1; 3,1; 7,1, *Smyrna*, 8,2. Ignatius firmly believes that only if one is united with the bishop in worship, faith and obedience could he be united with Christ. Cfr. *Ephesians*, 5,1; *Magnasians* 3; 6,2.
17. Cfr. M. HENGEL, *op. cit.*, p. 34; W. BOSSUET, *Kyrios Christos*, p. 120; E. LUCIER, *Nityajivante Rahasyam* (Malayalam translation of *Getting to know the Eucharist*) Chunanganvely 1985, p. 2.
18. Cfr. I. H. MARSHALL, *The Gospel of Luke*, Exeter 1978, pp. 800, 804; H. SCHURMANN, *Traditionsgeschichtliche Untersuchungen* Duesseldorf 1968, pp. 159-192.
19. Cfr. J. JEREMIAS, *The Eucharistic Words of Jesus* London 1962, pp. 169-171; H. SCHURMANN, *Der Einsetzungsbericht*, Munster 1955, pp. 94-112; I. H. MARSHALL, *op. cit.*, pp. 805-807.
20. J. DELORME et al., *The Eucharist in the New Testament*, London-Dublin, 1965, p. 39.

the prayer of Epiclesis of the anaphora of St. James in combined typologies and combined allusions to scriptural texts, a mosaic of O.T. and N.T. expressions and allusions, are typically in the Hebrew technique of the Qumran Hodayot (psalms)<sup>21</sup>. And the most striking note about this style is that it is a speciality of Luke's language among the New Testament authors. This mosaic style also is another pointer to the early existence of a definite developed form of the Eucharistic liturgy in the Antiochene church and that itself after the manner of the Jewish-Christian tradition of the first years. As in Jerusalem, in Antioch also, the liturgy was celebrated on the Lord's day (Sunday) in the sanctuary in the leadership of bishop and with the co-operation of the priest's congregation and with the assistance of deacons<sup>22</sup>. In the first century itself there existed in Antioch the anaphora of St. James in a definite form with the fundamentals and some prayers which were carried on to and developed in the subsequent reactions.

The Antiochene Church is basically and originally continuation and extension of the Jerusalem Church. Hellenist Christians from Jerusalem laid the foundation of the Antiochene Church. They transplanted a Greek form of the original Jerusalem worship probably with contextual modifications. The universalist theology of the Antiochene Church must have influenced the Antiochene form during its course of practice and development. Still, the Antiochene form too

preserved the original Jerusalem flavour and tenour. Since the original sources by place and person are the same, similarities between the Aramaic form in Jerusalem and the Greek form in Antioch must be probably more dominant than are elements of dissimilarities between the two<sup>23</sup>. The Antiochene development of the Jerusalem St. James Liturgy scored it another name "The Antiochene order". Today, normally the designation 'Antiochene Liturgy' is taken to mean the form of the Liturgical order as developed by the Monophysites (anti-chalcedonians). St. James Anaphora, born in Jerusalem, brought to, brought up and shaped in Antioch, is rightly called the Jerusalem-Antioch Liturgy of St James.

#### Pre-Chalcedonian Development of Syriac and Greek forms

We have already seen that Aramaic and Greek forms of the worship took their shape in the Jerusalem Christian communities of the first years. The Greek form was transplanted to Antioch. The Aramaic form continued to exist in Jerusalem till Jerusalem also shifted on to Greek in Liturgy also. When did it happen? Historians differ. Can we connect it with the changes after the fall of Jerusalem? Some Historians suggest the end of the third portion of the second century as the possible period, Egeria witnesses that already in the beginning of the fifth century (between 414-416) the Liturgy was celebrated in Greek in Jerusalem.<sup>25</sup> This Greek

21. Cfr. H. RINGGREN, "Luke's use of the Old Testament; *HTR* 79:1-3 (1986), pp. 227-235, esp. pp. 228-234.

22. Cfr. IGNATIUS OF Antioch, *Magnasians*, 2; 6,1; 9,1; 13,1; *Trall.* 2,1-3; 3,1, 7,1; *Philadelphia* 4; *Smyrna* 6,3; 7,1; 8,12.

23. Take note of the Judaeo-Christian style in the letters of St. Ignatius of Antioch.

24. Bring to mind also the opinion that the Gospel according to Matthew was originally written in Aramaic and afterwards it was converted into koine Greek.

25. Between A. D. 414-416 Egeria made a pilgrimage to Jerusalem.

of sabbath observance and began observing "the Lord's day".<sup>15</sup> The identification "Christianoi" sheds light also on the character of the worship of this new community. The allegation of cannibalism also goes hand in hand with the new name. The "christianoï" received the Body and Blood of Christ in worship. Besides, the new name contains also the idea that they are a community that worshipped under the leadership of bishop, because without a bishop there is no worship.<sup>16</sup> It needs no high imaginative power to assume that the form of the communal worship of the original Antiochene *Christianoi* could nothing but be what their founders inherited and took with them from Jerusalem, though contextual improvements by adaptation are not impossible. Naturally, it must be the Greek version of the original Jerusalem form that served as the foundation. But to dream of too much difference between the Jerusalem Syriae and Greek forms may console only the dreamer!

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20. J. DELORME et al., *The Eucharist in the New Testament*, London-Dublin, 1965, p. 39.

main liturgical text only in the Syrian Churches of the post-Chalcedonian Antiochene Liturgical tradition.

The pre-Chalcedonian development of St James' Anaphora is a long history. Born in Syriac (Aramic) in the very soil of Jesus' death and Resurrection and the First Pentecost was soon converted into Greek, travelled to Antioch, returned to Jerusalem in still more developed shape and finally converted again into the language of origin. Before Chalcedon the Syriac versions originated in Jerusalem. St James' Jerusalem-Antioch anaphora reached many other countries and Churches through linguistic versions and formulations and redactions of different liturgies.

#### Post-Chalcedonian Development in the Antiochene Churches

Eventually the Chalcedon Synod (451) divided the Antiochene Church in the first stage into two: the Melkites and the Aephaloi (non-Chalcedonians). Those who accorded to the synod were the Melkites (meaning, those who stood with the king). They were the Orthodox (true faith) Christians.<sup>29</sup> The non-Chalcedonians gradually were unified as the "Jacobites", and still later also renowned as the Syrian Church of Antioch.

The Melkites (Orthodox) inhabited mainly in cities with Greek as the official language. And Greek continued to be their language of worship. Their Patriarch resided in Antioch. They continued to use the anaphora of St James. Later on they went closer

to the Byzantine traditions and adopted the Byzantine Liturgy, which itself was born in Antioch and was shaped there or elsewhere before it was brought to Byzantium.<sup>30</sup> The Liturgy of the Word of the Melkite Greek Church of the present is of Antiochene origin.<sup>31</sup> Many of their later anaphoras are common with the Syrian Antiochene tradition.

The Liturgy of the Maronite Church, an off-shoot of the Chalcedonians was originally St James'; but later adopted Sāār (very close to Addai-Mari anaphora). However the Maronite liturgy is attached to the Syrian Antiochene by "its ritual structure, the literary genius of its prayers, the patristic patrimony etc."<sup>32</sup>

It is the Syrian Church of Antioch that contributed substantially to the latest developments to the Jerusalem-Antioch anaphora of St James, as they alone continued it fully after the division and growth of the Antiochene Church into three in the second stage in the post-Chalcedonian era. The present West Syriac forms of the anaphora of St James are due to the works of the Jacobite fathers of subsequent centuries. The Jacobites of Antioch lived mostly in villages with Syriac as the languages of conversation. Syriac was taken also for the language of their liturgy. Mar Yaqob Burdana is said to have made in the sixth century the first Syriac translation of the complete Antiochene Greek text of the anaphora of St James. Thus in Antioch itself is born the Syriac version of the Jerusalem-Antioch Liturgy. Naturally the Syrians

29. It is a funny turn in the history of the term "Orthodox" that it is taken up also by non-Chalcedonian churches.

30. Cfr. L. BOUYER, *Eucharistic, theologie et spiritualite de la priere eucharistique* Paris 1966, p. 142.

31. Cfr. E. SKAF *art.cit.*, p.279

32. E. KHOURY, "Genesis and development of the Maronite Divine Liturgy" in J. MADEY (ed), *op. cit.*, pp. 101-131, 103,

form might most probably be the Antiochene Greek form which possibly entered Jerusalem after the Fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 72, with local and contextual modifications. Egeria goes on to report that during the Liturgy the prayers of the Liturgy and bishop's homily during the liturgy were translated into Syriac in order that the common people may understand. And this practice of Syriac translation during the Liturgy itself might have helped the formation of an eventual Jerusalem Syriac version of the Antiochene Greek order of St James anaphora.<sup>26</sup>

Before Chalcedonian problems arose the Anaphora of St James went through a five-stage development: The original Jerusalem Aramaic form; the original Jerusalem Greek version; the original Antiochene Greek form in Antioch; the Jerusalem version of the Antiochene Greek form and lastly its Jerusalem syriac version. The modern Greek form of the anaphora could be at the fourth stage.

#### From Antioch to other Churches and various versions

After the Fall of Jerusalem Antioch took the place of Jerusalem as regards the Christian movement. It became the Christian centre and the missionary centre. Antioch enjoyed control of the missionary work in Palestine, Syria, Asia Minor and Mesopotamia. Naturally, the missionaries took the Jerusalem-Antioch Liturgy to the missions. This is the

tradition we find throughout the history of missions. The Jerusalem-Antioch Liturgy seems to have helped the neighbouring Churches in two ways with regard to formation of their liturgies. Some adopted and adapted the anaphora of St James. Others formed their own Liturgies depending on or inspired by the Jerusalem-Antioch Liturgy of St. James. Intensity of imitation and dependence varied. But influence of the Jerusalem - Antioch liturgy in the formation of the ancient liturgies of the East is a plausible historical truth. The privileged position of the Jerusalem - Antioch liturgy of St James, i.e., its provenance from St James and Jerusalem and Antioch's ecclesiastical and political prominence in the whole of Oriens<sup>27</sup> could be adduced as factors which accelerated the recognition and influence of the Jerusalem - Antioch Liturgy in the ancient liturgies of the Christian East. The Churches in Palestine, Syria, Georgia, Armenia, Greece and Egypt used St James anaphora. Constantinople and the Greek church of Jerusalem followed it till the fifth and twelfth centuries respectively. Even today on October 23, the Greek Catholic Melkite Churches in Jerusalem, Cyprus and Zante use the liturgy of St James the Minor<sup>28</sup>. In the sixth century the Greek anaphora of St James was translated into Ethiopian and in the seventh century, with Slavonic (Russian) and Armenian. At present these translations are not used in the respective Churches. Presently St James anaphora is the

26. No Manuscript of the Jerusalem Syriac form of Egeria period has reached us.
27. The Petrine foundation of the Apostolic episcopal see of Antioch, the control of the missionary work in the neighbouring countries and the Antiochene theological school contributed to the ecclesiastical prominence of Antioch. The Persian and Jerusalem churches were under Antioch. Jerusalem was made an independent patriarchate only in the Chalcedon Synod. Politically Antioch was the capital of Oriens.
28. Cfr. E. SKAF, "The Holy and Divine Liturgy of the Melkite Greek Catholic Church" in J. MADEY (ed) *op.cit.*, pp.275-324,281.

## Ecumenical Strategies of the Malankara Catholic Church

We live in an age of pluralism in which there is nevertheless a widespread and sincere desire for mutual understanding, coupled with a real thirst for universality. The Christian ecumenical movement is a prime example of this general trend towards a global perspective and an important one for the shaping of the future. The ecumenical movement is now in the process of being widened and deepened into what is sometimes called "the wider ecumenism" or "the ecumenism of the world religions" (Hans Kung).

Avery Dulles, in his treatises on the Church,<sup>1</sup> has presented various models for the Church and prescribed ecumenical strategies in a pluralistic age. In relation to the actual religious situation, ecumenism might take as its proximate goal the achievement

of a heterogeneous community of witnessing dialogue. Such heterogeneous communities might be modelled on friendship rather than on the spiritual family and might be established among groups of Christians whose ideas they could not mutually share.

It should be acknowledged that every Christian tradition contains insights of potential value for the rest. In this sense the existence of multiple autonomous traditions has been, providentially, a means of preserving pluralism at a time when there might have been too little tolerance for differences in any one organizational church. It would be most unfortunate if the ecumenical imperative meant that the separate traditions had nothing better than to "die" for the sake of christian unity. Today, however,

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the original theological wealth of the Jerusalem - Antioch anaphora it would be a unique contribution towards the cause of ecumenism. They could even attempt at re-constructing the fundamentals of the original form of St. James anaphora - a very difficult task<sup>f</sup>

perhaps even impossible. But that will surely help them get nearer to the apostolic era. A project of restoring the Syrian Liturgy according to the norms of the Syrian Fathers<sup>35</sup> is another desirable ecumenical field inviting especially these syrian Christians.

Kurian Valuparampil

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1. *Models of the Church* (Image Books, New York, 1978); *The Resilient Church* (Doubleday & Co., New York, 1977); *The Catholicity of the Church* (Clarendon, Oxford, 1985).
  35. G. KHOURI-SARKIS, *L'Orient Syrien*, vol. 9 (1964), pp. 409-442 and vol. 10 (1965), pp. 1-40 presents such a project.

inserted new dogmatic elements influenced by the Christological controversies of the time and group (e.g. the Trisagion as addressed to Christ, changed from its original theological stance.) Mar Burdana's translation was unsatisfactory. It was not faithful to the Greek original. Mar Yaqob of Edessa (640-708) revised the Syriac version with the help of Greek texts. Afterwards renowned Syriac scholars and liturgists as Moses Bar Kepha (813-903) and Mar Dionysius Bar Salibi (+1173) enlarged the text adding more prayers. Thus there came into existence a new longer Syriac text of the anaphora of St James. This longer text is at present used in the Syrian Orthodox and Syrian Catholic Churches of Antioch.<sup>33</sup>

In the Persian Maphrianate,<sup>34</sup> Mar Gregorios Bar Hebraeus (+1286) revised the Syriac text also abridging certain prayers. The Malankara Syrian Church(es) follow the Bartebraeus-revised and abridged form of the Antiochene Syrian liturgy. The Jacobites in Palestine continued the Syriac version in slightly different way.

The Jacobites themselves developed the Antiochene Syrian liturgy in three ways: the Western style among the Syrian province, the Maphrianate Eastern form of Persian and the Jerusalem form of Palestine. At present St. James' Jerusalem-Antioch Liturgy is used now here in its original form.

#### An Enrichment to the Indian Church

In the second half of the seventeenth century the Antiochene

Syrian Liturgy was introduced in India—a providential consequence of the Portuguese Missionary work in India—through Antiochene Jacobite prelates. From 1751 on the abridged form of the Antiochene Syrian anaphora became the basic text of the liturgy of the Malankara Syrian community (Puthenkoottukar).

Theologically and ecclesiologically viewed the introduction of the Antiochene Syrian Liturgy into India has turned to be a contribution of history towards a better understanding, recognition and appreciation and enrichment of the catholicity of the church in India. Indian Church is enabled to enjoy another antique liturgical tradition also. The coming and presence of the Antiochene Syrian version of the Jerusalem - Antioch Liturgy of St James into this eastern country is a boon and boost to the original Syrian Christian tradition of the Indian church. It accelerates the re-orientalizing process of the St Thomas Syrian church (es) and binds together a good number of christians who bear vestiges of the Syria-Palestinian traditions. It enjoys the coveted status of being an ecumenical chorus of at least five particular churches confessing allegiance to different heads and faiths.

#### An Ecumenical Endeavour proposed

The Jerusalem-Antioch Liturgical order of St. James already keeps the Syrian churches of India and elsewhere in an ecumenical tact. Could these Syrian Churches following the Antiochene Syrian liturgical traditions put in a concerted effort to re-discover

33. In 1934 Malankara Syrian Catholic Archbishop Mar Ivanios of Trivandrum printed this longer version for the use of the Malankara Catholics. Cfr. L. MOOLEVETIL, *Yākōbinte anāphura oru Paṭhanam* (Malayalam), Kottayam 1976, p. 268, a. i.

34. This is the Persian region under the spiritual supervision of Maphrian, a representative appointed of the Patriarch of Antioch, who governed the diaspora Jacobites in Persia.

history, inherited one of the most ancient liturgies and came to communion with the Catholic Church as an individual Church with all its prerogatives and obligations. It has indeed to be seen as a denomination of the Christian Church with its own liturgy, customs, traditions and structure, most of which it shares with its sister Malankara Churches.

If the Koonan Cross oath of 1653, by which a section of the Syrian Church broke off from the Roman communion, was a revolt against the Western Church's refusal to recognize the identity and individuality of the Malankara Church, the historic "reunion" of 1930 was, to a certain extent, the retrieval of that due recognition. The significant element in the "reunion" is the coming together in unity of the separated Christian churches. According to the ecumenical thinking of our day, the mutual relationship among the churches is more important than the return of individual separated brethren into the Catholic Church. The ministerial role of the Malankara Catholic Church, therefore, consists in serving as a link and a bridge between the Churches.

It is noteworthy that, in his address to the members of this church during his visit to Trivandrum on February 8, 1986 Pope John Paul II said: "Today I wish to encourage you in your faith, in your fidelity to your ancient traditions, in your sincere efforts to promote fraternal relations with your brothers and sisters of the Jacobite and Orthodox Churches, and other ecclesial communions."<sup>5</sup>

Communion with the Catholic church was, in fact, initiated by the Reunion movement", but it is incomplete in more than one sense. The liabilities of the Malankara Catholic Church are:

1. It lacks the patriarchal form of government prevalent in the Eastern Churches. It has, therefore, to strive towards obtaining at least a Catholicos or a major archbishop as its common head.

2. It lacks a proper code of canon law and constitution of its own. Its present structure is not different from that of the Latin (Roman) Church.

3. It has not been able to evolve a theology or spirituality based on its ancient traditions nor train its clergy along the same lines. It is hoped that the opening of the Malankara Catholic Theological Seminary will remedy this disability to some extent. We may also legitimately hope that the present leadership of the Malankara Catholic Church will find the same "wisdom and sensitivity to the cause of Christian unity" in the present Pope as Mar Ivanios found in Pope Pius XI.<sup>6</sup>

On the credit side, the Malankara Catholic Church steadfastly clung to the most venerable and sublime of Oriental liturgies it has inherited by divine providence—a liturgy which provides a living link with the ante-Nicene Church and even the Apostolic Cell in Jerusalem and one which is also beautifully adapted to the Eucharistic devotion of Indian worshippers. This Church, therefore, having jealously preserved its West Syrian liturgy and many of the Antiochene traditions, which have since been contextualized in the course of three centuries, is in a more advantageous position to act as a catalyst in the Indian Context. Along with other Malankara Churches, it rejected latinization during the European missionary thrust, but in order to assert its credibility with its brethren of the separated Churches,

5. ORIGINS, NC Documentary Service, February 20, 1986 (Vol. 15, no. 36), p. 591

6. *ibid.*

there is an increasing agreement that the only worthwhile unity will be one which gathers up all the enriching diversity of the varying Christian traditions. Instead of striving after uniformity, the Church should constantly try to evoke and stimulate man's creativity, to encourage and maintain diversity in communion and communion in diversity.

Dalles finds pluralism very great, perhaps too great, in some of the Protestant churches, but too slow to assert itself in Roman Catholicism. He attributes the strong centralization in modern Catholicism to historical accidents and suggests that the decentralization of the future will involve a certain measure of de-Romanization. In principle it is not only possible but also desirable for Christianity to assume different forms suited to different socio-cultural situations.

The "uniate model" - that is, the relationship between the Roman Catholic Church of the West and the so-called "uniate" churches of the East - has sometimes been proposed as an alternative concept of unity. However, the term "uniatism" generally means the submission of one church to the doctrinal and ecclesiological principles of another, in return for the permission to retain its own liturgical and canonical practices. It has, however, been pointed out that this type of procedure leads to an unfortunate dissociation between liturgical rite and discipline on the one hand, and theological, doctrinal, confessional typology on the other.

H. E. Cardinal Willebrands, president of the Vatican Secretariat for

Promoting Christian Unity, has endorsed the idea of typological diversity within a single ecclesial allegiance<sup>2</sup>. He has also proposed the ecclesiology of communion as "a central insight for the future development of ecumenism"<sup>3</sup>. Theologians such as Yves Congar, M-J. Le Guillou, Jerome Hamer and Joseph Ratzinger have taken up the theme of "Communio" as a central motive for understanding the nature and structure of the Church.

The Church as a communion is embodied not only in the "universal" communion of the faithful the world over and down the ages, but also in each local community that remains in "communion" with the universal Church. This type of ecclesiology has a better basis in the biblical notion of communion (koinonia) and is ecumenically very fruitful, being far more congenial to Protestants and Orthodox and being the basis of the Catholic ecclesiologies of Augustine and Aquinas.

The way to achieve unity, in today's "inter-contextual" ecumenical method, is not by "one common theology" or by "one common ecclesiology" but by means of a "communion of faith", maintained through and in spite of the diversity of the churches and their diverse contexts and theologies.<sup>4</sup> Herein lies the unique role of the Malankara Catholic Church, which belongs to the family of the syrian churches of India and is at the same time in communion with the Roman Catholic Church which has the strongest claim for universality in today's world. This Church takes root from the seeds of faith sown by the Apostle Thomas, survived the vicissitudes of

2. Address in Cambridge, England, *Documents on Anglican/Roman Catholic Relations*. Washington, D. C., 1972, p. 39
3. "One in Christ", 1975 - Vol. XI, No. 4, p. 313
4. See Kuncheria Pathil: "The Twentieth Century Encounter of the Churches" in *Religions in Dialogue: East and West Meet* (University Press of America, 1985) pp. 140-1.

## The Thomas Christians Judaeo - Buddhist - Hindu - Christians ?

Often in books on the Thomas Christians in India one may find remarks that they were converted from Hinduism and that they are Hindu Christians. A few have partly challenged this hypothesis and asserted that they were predominantly not Hindu Christians but Judaeo-Christians. It appears that one of the influential sections of the St. Thomas Christians in India was Buddhist converts.

It is difficult to testify regarding the religion of the early inhabitants of Kerala. It might have been a kind of nature worship as one finds even today among the tribals in Kerala. In a subsequent period one finds the religion of the Dravidians, which is very close to the worship of the early inhabitants of Mexico, and Egypt. In a later period Hinduism spread.

The period immediately before Christ, one finds a rapid spread of Buddhism in Kerala. According to some, Buddhism found adherents among the family of the Perumals, the rulers of Chera (Kerala). Cranganore (Kodungalloor) was the most important centre of Kerala life. It had a port and it was the meeting point between East and West, between China and West Asia and even Europe. It was the cultural and commercial centre. Trikkannāmatilakam, a few kilometres west of Irinjālakuda, and Saharimala regions (Nilackal) were the most important Buddhist centres. When large number of the inhabitants of Kerala became Buddhists, there arose conflicts between Hindus and Buddhists. Gradually, Buddhists lost some of their

centres and they became a minority. Some of them migrated to Srīlanka (Ceylon). Thus Sabarimala, a Buddhist centre in central Kerala came under the control of the Hindus. Those Buddhists who returned to Hinduism continued to visit the shrine at Sabarimala, their former Buddhist centre. Even today there are evident signs to demonstrate that Sabarimala was a Buddhist centre - the recital of Saranam: the devotees of the Sabarimala Pratiṣṭha recite continuously throughout their journey "swāmiyē, sarana Ayyappa", "Saranam" is typically a Buddhist feature: "Sangam saranam gachāmi, s̄atyam dharmaṁ saranam gachāmi, Budham saranam gachāmi."

When Christianity reached Kerala in 52 A. D. many of the people who were under Buddhist influence—Ahimsa, human fraternity etc.—and who were persecuted by the Hindus, accepted the new religion, which, according to them, perfected their religious sentiments.

The Christians were known in Kerala as "Mārgakkār" and "Mārgawāsikal". The word used for the process of Christianisation was "Margam kūduka". "Mārgam" is a typical Buddhist expression. Buddhism has "ashtamārgam". "Margam" is "way" and is in Christian tradition biblically based (Acts 9:2).

Until recently in certain parts of Kerala the Christians were ridiculed as "Baudhanmār" (Buddhists). The Christians used to call the non-Christians *Ajnārikal*. This expression has found place even in the liturgical books.

it should now prove itself to be something more than a mere "uniate" model or just a province of the Roman Church.

In the fields of evangelization and pastoral care, the Syro-Malankara Church is now in a position to assert its legitimate rights, consequent on the provisions in the recent letter of Pope John Paul II to the Catholic bishops of India. It is hoped that the implementation of these provisions would help to perfect the communion of the Malankara Church with the Roman Catholic Church and enable it to enter into a meaningful dialogue with the other churches. The next step in the future of ecumenism will be regular inter-communion and inter-celebration. Conciliar fellowship and an ecumenical synod will be yet another distinctive goal of the ecumenical movement.

Nevertheless, Conciliar fellowship and an ecumenical council participated by all the Churches will not be the end of the Churches' search for unity, but only a beginning. It will be the beginning of a new life together, a new way of being and living: for the churches it will be the beginning of

a new journey together with other religions and the whole of mankind. In the encounter of the churches with the other religions and ideologies, the lessons they have learned in their own encounter will be of great value and the stages and patterns of the new encounter could be more or less the same. However, unity of the Church will be fully achieved only when the whole humanity will be fully united, when the *oikoumene* will actually include the whole world.<sup>7</sup>

In the meanwhile, with this world vision of the ecumenical movement in view, the growing and dynamic "little flock" of the Malankara Catholic Church could prove a powerful instrument for the evangelization and spiritual enrichment of our vast sub-continent, in fulfilment of the prophetic words of Pope John Paul II: "May your constant aspiration be that the time will soon come when the prayer of Our Lord for perfect unity among his disciples will be realized ... so that the Church in every place and in every age may shine forth as a people made one with the unity of the Father, the Son and the Holy spirit."<sup>8</sup>

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7. Kuncheria Pathil, *op. cit.* pp. 143-4  
8. ORIGINS, *ibid.* p. 591.

important now, when this teaching must take account of the dialogues which are in progress. Once they are engaged in this ministry, how will these priests be able under their bishop's direction to find judicious and pastorally responsible ways of informing the faithful about the dialogues and their progress, if they have not yet been initiated into them during their training?" (Address of November 18, 1978). From the beginning of his pontificate, the Pope has also insisted on the need for Christians to bear a common witness (cf. *Redemptor Hominis*, 11 and this too "will call for a new effort of ecumenical formation and deepening of mutual understanding" (Address at Ecumenical Centre, Geneva, June 12, 1984). Such formation, so necessary for all Catholics (cf. *Catechesi Tradendae*, 32), is all the more necessary for those who as priests are to exercise a special service of unity.

3. There are, however, places in which it seems that it has not yet been possible to attend in giving a proper place in the teaching of Catholic teachers at Catholic theological institutions to the required ecumenical dimension of the teaching of Catholic theology. In other places it appears that ecumenical teaching must be judged to be disproportionate in quantity in relation to the whole theological programme, while elsewhere it is so inadequate as not to fulfil the genuine concept of ecumenical formation. Hence there have arisen misunderstandings, and at times even misinterpretations, of the *Ecumenical Directory Part II* (1970), which could lead also to some confusion in the realm of doctrine.

4. As regards the application of the norms of the *Ecumenical Directory* concerning the teaching of ecumenism in Theological Faculties, it should be noted that, with the promulgation of the Apostolic Constitution *Sapientia Christiana* (1979), a new situation has arisen, different from that which existed when the *Directory* was published. The new Constitution provides for three Cycles in the curriculum of Theological Faculties, whereas the *Ecumenical Directory* referred to the two Cycles required by the previous Constitution, *Deus Scientiarum Dominus*. Consequently, the *Directory* divided the students of the Theological Faculties into only two categories, namely those who had already completed the theological formation required in the Cycle for the Licentiate (*a fortiori* in that for the Doctorate) and those who had not obtained academic degrees (cf. *Ecumenical Directory*, 11, n. 83). Since students are now divided into three categories, according to the three Cycles of the Faculties, it has become necessary to apply the norms of the *Ecumenical Directory* more precisely to this new situation. It is a matter, then, of making these norms more precise and of complementing them.

5. For all these reasons, the Secretariat for promoting Christian Unity, after due consultation with the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith and the Congregation for Catholic Education, is now writing to all Episcopal Conferences to give some precise indications regarding ecumenical teaching. What is said here of Theological Faculties applies also *mutatis mutandi*, to *Seminaries* and other *Centres* which, although not Faculties, offer theological teaching, since this should clearly be in full harmony with the aims of the ecumenical renewal.

## I. Formation in Ecumenism

6. Normal theological teaching by Catholic professors and teachers in Catholic Theological Institutions should take full account of the ecumenical

# Documentation

## Circular Letter on Ecumenical Teaching From The Secretariat of Promoting Christian Unity

In his covering letter of December 15, 1986 to the episcopal conferences, which accompanied this document, Cardinal Johannes Willebrands noted that this circular letter: "... has been required both in view of the new structuring of studies in theology faculty programmes and because of provisions in the New Code of Canon Law. The content of this letter will be incorporated and expounded in the Ecumenical Directory which is now being revised in the light of orientations given at the last Plenary Meeting of our Secretariat (February 1986)".

## Circular Letter to Bishops on Certain Aspects of Ecumenical Teaching in Catholic Theological Institutions

### INTRODUCTION

1. The new Code of Canon Law states that the formation of students for the priesthood should include instruction on "dealing with people, including non-Catholics and unbelievers" (can 256 § 1) and on "ecumenical questions" (can. 256 § 2).
2. In his first address to the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity in November 1978, Pope John Paul II stressed the importance of this task: "The Council demands a particular effort in teaching theology and forming the attitudes of future priests" (cf. *Unitatis Redintegratio*, 10). This is especially

Budhism is known as "*gnānamārgam*" (gnosticism in the right sense). Hence "*ajñānika*" meant those who do not belong to Budhism and eventually to Christianity. *Mōksham* (Mukti, *Mōchanam*, *Nirvānam*-salvation), *Mōkshathil pōvuka* (to go to heaven) etc are Budhist terminologies. These expressions are even today prevalent among the Thomas Christians.

The Budhists used to shave their heads. This custom was widely prevalent in India among the Thomas Christians. From early childhood they used to shave their heads. Wearing a white cloth, and a covering (*randām*

*mundu*) also are remnants of the Budhist traditions.

The expressions "*dharmakkār* (beggars), "*dharmam kodukkuka*" (give alms) etc. are still prevalent among the Christians and others in Kerala. It reminds us of the Budhist monks who used to wander around reciting, "*dharmam saranam gachāmi*". The expression, "*palli*" (*ekklesia*), "*pallikoodam*" (school), "*paliyōgam*" (parish council), "*pētta*" (village) etc. are remnants of Budhism. All these point to the hypothesis that the early converts to Christianity in India were a Judaeo-Budhist-Hindu Community.

G. Chediath

Communities should offer in advance to those in charge of the Catholic Theological Faculties, Seminaries, Institutes or Schools of Theology a suitable synopsis of the teaching they are to give.

e) Where necessary, Catholic Institutions will organize seminars or courses to put into context the teaching given by lecturers from other Churches or ecclesial Communities.

### III. Ecumenical formation, A gradual process

11. Like all formation, ecumenical formation must involve a *gradual process*. This "principle of graduality" finds its clearest application in the present three-cycle structure of the academic theological curriculum. Consequently, in view of what has been said in no. 4 above, the courses given by lecturers from other Churches or ecclesial Communities, will find their proper place in the *Second and Third Cycles of Faculties*. In these Cycles lectures from other Churches or ecclesial Communities can give teaching of an historical and expository character, as for instance concerning the "status", the credal statements, the structures of their Church or ecclesial Community, its position in the ecumenical movement and in the World Council of Churches.

12. Since the purpose of the *First Cycle* of Faculties is to offer an organic and complete exposition of Catholic doctrine (cf. Apostolic Constitution *Sapientia Christiana*, art. 72a), in this Cycle, as also in theological courses at non-academic level (*Seminaries, Religious Houses of Study*), lecturers from other Churches and ecclesial Communities will not be asked to give systematic or formative courses. But in this cycle courses of a technical nature can be entrusted to such teachers, as, for example, languages, communications media, religious sociology, etc. in accordance with the provisions made by the Bishop or the Episcopal Conference (cf. *Ecumenical Directory*, 11, nn 84, 92).

13. It will be the responsibility of the Theological Centre or Institute to make a report to the local Ordinary or to the Grand Chancellor of the University concerning courses given by members of other Churches and ecclesial Communities.

### Conclusion

14. We are grateful to bishops, who, we are sure, will give attention to this important aspect of a complete theological formation, so that through a truly balanced formation, students may be well grounded in their own faith, open to dialogue and, as we hope, may become builders of unity.

dimension of Catholic theology. Consequently, every Catholic teacher, explaining the various tracts and courses, should give full weight to the *ecumenical aspects* therein involved. Furthermore, Catholic Theological Institutions have the task of completing this formation with suitable *courses on ecumenism* as a subject in its own right, these too given by Catholic teachers. This "means both including the ecumenical dimension in courses of theology and giving explicit teaching on the ecumenical movement, its history, its theological and pastoral significance, and the new advances which are taking place through it" (John Paul II, *Address to delegates of ecumenical commissions*, April 27th, 1985).

7. Ecumenical formation implies, then, an adequate and balanced knowledge of Catholic doctrine regarding the ecumenical material that is studied.

## II. Lecturers from other Churches and Ecclesial Communities

8. Where, the better to ensure a proper ecumenical formation, the competent authority judges that in the local religious context it is advisable to ask teachers or professors from other Churches and ecclesial Communities to assist in a Catholic Theological Institution (cf. *Ecumenical Directory* II, no. 90), it should be borne in mind that such teaching will be concerned solely with the doctrinal positions of the Churches and ecclesial Communities they represent. Their work and their first-hand information will complete the ecumenical formation the students have already received from Catholic teachers.

9. Teaching offered by a member of another Church or ecclesial Community is given in the context of the dialogue-relationships between the Catholic Church and other Churches and ecclesial Communities. But in itself it does not formally correspond to the structures of the *ecumenical dialogue*, since the teaching given in Catholic Theological Institutions has as its goal simply the *formative studies* of the students.

### 10. Concerning teachers from other Churches and ecclesial Communities

a) It is the responsibility of the competent ecclesiastical and academic authorities to determine, in conformity with the directives issued by the Episcopal Conference on the basis of the relevant documents of the Holy See, whether or not it is opportune or necessary to invite professors or teachers from other Churches or ecclesial Communities to give conferences, courses, etc. in a Catholic Theological Institution, in accordance with the "differences between various nations and regions, differences deriving from varying individual maturity and experience, differences also resulting from the various state of relationships .. between the Catholic Church and other Churches or ecclesial Communities" (*Ecumenical Directory*, II no. 65; cf. also nn. 84, 91).

b) It is also the responsibility of the same authorities to invite in this way only such teachers, lecturers and professors from other Churches or ecclesial Communities who not only possess the necessary religious, moral and professional qualifications, but also are truly representative of their confessions and evince a truly ecumenical spirit.

c) Teachers from other Churches and ecclesial Communities will be classified as "visiting lecturers".

d) In accordance with normal academic practice and to ensure a proper coordination in the teaching given, teachers from other Churches and ecclesial

of the Byzantine church written in the West 17 pages; 3) the Byzantine historiography in 20 pages; 4) the Byzantine theology in 67 pages; 5) the Byzantium monasticism in 21 pages 6) Byzantium as historical authority. It gives a comprehensive picture of the Byzantine church.

Vol. III: Christianity in Europe and Asia in the age of the Crusades: This part has seven chapters: 1) Presuppositions and spiritual-religious basis of the Crusades in 38 chapters; 2) the Popes and the Crusades in 13 pages; 3) the popular Crusades in 14 pages; 4) the Crusades of the Knights in 58 pages; 5) the victory of Islam (1260-91) (6 pages); 6) the Latin Church in the East (19 pp.); 7) the echo and after effect of the Crusades (22 pp.)

Each volume has in the beginning a very detailed "table of contents". Going through the contents itself one gets almost a whole and detailed picture of the subjects treated in the volumes. Then there is a bibliography in each volume. The bibliography is according to topics and places and themes. But the book does not give references to statements and the presentation is popular. It does in no way diminish the value of the volumes published in the famous CSCO.

G. Chediath

*Chretiens Syriaques sous les Abbassides surtout a Baghdad (749-1258)*, by Jean Maurice Fiey, Louvain, Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium, 1980, vol. 420, Subsidia tomus 59. pp. XXII-301.

The Arab as well as the Islamic world was dominated for more than five hundred years by a dynasty which descended from Mohamet's uncle, Abbas. Hence its name: The Abbassids. Under the reign of the second caliph, Al-Mansur, Baghdad, originally known as The City of Peace, was founded. It remained the brilliant capital of the dynasty till the Mongols conquered it in 1758.

Christianity in Baghdad and in Mesopotamia for that matter, the territory of which mostly corresponds to that of modern Iraq, was represented by the two Syriac Churches, the Nestorian or East-Syrian, and the Jacobite or West-Syrian. There was also a small number of Melkites, who were Byzantines from the Levant.

Father J. M. Fiey, the learned French Dominican from Beirut, has not only put to use all the Syriac. i. e. Christian, sources available, but also the Arabic material, above all the Muslim historians and geographers. It enables him to provide his reader with a graphic picture of the whole Abbassid period caliph by caliph, but focussed on the relations between that Muslim power and the local Christians. For, as the subtitle has it, the author speaks mostly of the situation of the Christians in Baghdad itself. It necessarily includes portraits of all the East-Syrian catholicos, whose see was also in the city and whose pontificates corresponded to the successive caliphs, in fact 36 catholicos against 37 Muslim rulers. The Jacobite primates (maphrians), though rarely found in Baghdad, are not neglected either.

The treatment meted out to Christians, the *dimmi*, under the Abbassids depended on a number of circumstances. The most important can be listed as follows: the influence of the Christian physicians, mostly East-Syrian, at court, whose presence at the caliph's side goes back to the second ruler, Al-Mansur (754-775), and lasts almost till the capture of Baghdad by the

## Book Reviews

Emilianos Timiadus: *Nicene Creed. Our Common Faith*, Philadelphia: Fortress Press 1983 \$ 6. 95, P. 128.

The creed first promulgated by the Council of Nicaea (A.D. 325) and elaborated later by the subsequent council is here meant by the Nicene Creed which is generally known as the Nicene-Constantinopolitan creed. The Council of Nicaea dealt with the dogma of the Holy Trinity and especially with the divinity of the Father and of Christ. The council of Constantinople is claimed to have completed this creed by affirming the divinity of the Holy Spirit, and other dimensions of the Christian faith, namely the genuine notes of the Church, resurrection of the dead and the eternal life on which the Nicene creed in 325 A.D. had nothing to say. It is the summary of the Christian faith and provides our response to different heresies. It is recited in the Eucharistic assemblies of all Churches. The author examines the articles of faith contained in it and devotes a detailed study on the problem of filioque which was added to it only later in the Latin Church.

The author throws light on the practical bearing of the creed. These articles of faith bind all Christians of all ages. We need commit ourselves to the faith taught in it. In spite of the fact that many Churches are using it they are still divided and subdivided. A mere proclamation of our common faith is not enough to eliminate the existing doctrinal tensions and divisions. It should pervade the whole structure, discipline, ethics, spirituality and daily belief of each member of the Church.

Dr. Thomas Mannoorampampil

Peter Kawerau: *Ostkirchengeschichte*. 1-3 (CSCO 451. 441. 442 / Subsidia 70.64.65), Louvain, 1983,1982,1982.

Vol I: Christianity in Asia and Africa until the presence of the Portuguese in the Indian Ocean. This volume has six chapters dealing with 1) the Christianity in Asia in 70 pages (in Jerusalem, Antioch, Edessa, Persia, India, Armenia, Georgia, Central Asia, China, Siberia, Arabia and the Persian Gulf); 2) the Christianity in Africa in 30 pages (in Alexandria, Egypt, Nubia, Phila and Ethiopea); 3) the Syrian and Egyptian monasticism in 52 pages: the leading figures of these two monastic traditions are analysed and their chief characteristics are presented; 4) Nestorianism and Monophysitism in 22 pages: this chapter explains the events leading to Ephesus and Chalcedon, the role of St. Cyril, and the outburst of Monophysitism and the spread of the Jacobite Church in the middle ages; it speaks also of the "Nestorian Church in Persia" and the spread of Diophysitism in West Asia; 5) the Oriental Canon Law in 13 pages; 6) the appearance of the Portuguese in the Indian Ocean in 16 pages.

Vol. II: Christianity in the Eastern Roman-Byzantine Empire upto the conquest of Constantinople by the Osmanian Turks. This volume too has six chapters dealing with the various aspects of the Byzantine Christianity. 1) the general survey of the Byzantine Church history in 10 pages; 2) the history

mediaeval attitude": There is only one Rite in the Church, and the Universal Church means the Latin Church!

### 1. International Syriac Conference at SEERI, Kottayam, India

An International Syriac Conference was held at SEERI, Kottayam, India from 7 to 12 September 1987. It was the first of its kind conducted in India. SEERI (St. Ephrems' Ecumenical Research Institute) was founded on 14th Sept. 1985.

Many experts in Syriac Language, literature, history and Syriac Christian heritage from Britain, Europe, U.S.A., Australia, Iraq, Lebanon and India presented scholarly papers in the Conference. Among the participants there were priests, men and women religious and lay people. The talks, discussion, informal sharing and living together enabled both the speakers and the participants to share their ideas and experiences, appreciate and deepen various christian heritages. It was a unique chance for all to discover and appreciate the values hidden in various strains of the Syriac heritage. Many hold in high esteem only the Latin heritage and despise everything Eastern and Syriac. The main reason is ignorance and lack of contact with the Syriac and Eastern heritages. Knowledge of Syriac is a *conditio sine qua non* to delve deep into these treasures. This conference was an eye-opener and a humble but bold attempt. One cannot claim to be a true heir of the Syriac heritage if he is ignorant of its riches: one who is ignorant cannot appreciate its beauty and vitality; one who fails to appreciate and love it will automatically despise it and embrace the Latin heritage.

### 2. One-Day Seminar at Paurastya Vidyapitham, Kottayam, India

Under the joint auspices of Paurastya Vidyapitham and St. Thomas Apostolic Seminary, Kottayam, India, a one-day seminar was conducted on 31st October, 1987. The topics chosen for discussion were: (i) the Circular letter concerning studies of the Oriental Churches in Faculties, issued by the Congregation for Catholic Education on January 5th, 1987; (ii) the letter of Pope John Paul II to the Bishops of India on May 28th, 1987 concerning the Latin-Oriental relations.

Dr. Vellanickal, the President of the Paurastya Vidyapitham introduced the Circular Letter to the audience. The letter asks the Faculties to introduce studies of the Eastern Churches into the curriculum. The Church of Christ has two lungs - Eastern and Western. Dr. Vellanickal remarked that the letter means by the Eastern tradition, mostly the Greek Tradition. But there is another equally important Eastern Tradition, namely the Syriac Oriental tradition, the tradition of the "lesser Eastern Churches." It is the duty of Paurastya Vidyapitham and the Eastern Syriac Churches in India to learn this tradition, appreciate explain and propagate it.

Church is a Communion of Churches. All the Churches are of equal importance. One is not superior to the other. This truth has to be admitted as the basic principle of just solution to the Latin - Oriental situation in India - said Dr. Koodapuzha, Vice-president of Paurastya Vidyapitham. The letter of the Pope is a move in this direction and he praised the Pope for taking this bold step. He deplored the negative reaction expressed from different quarters of the Latin Church in India. Delaying to obey and implement the directives of the Holy See is nothing but disobedience to the Holy See. Pope has asked to educate priests, religious and the faithful so that they may accept

## News

### Reaction to the letter of Pope John Paul II to the bishops of India

Whether there is anything new in the recent letter of the Pope to the Indian bishops can be disputed. Some feel it is a repetition of the Vat. II Council decree on Oriental Churches, perhaps with some hesitation.

The first impression is that the Latin hierarchy seems to have 'accepted' the verdict of the Pope. But as time elapses the protests are becoming more and more manifest. Many false statistics and propaganda have begun to appear in the official publications of the Latin Church in India.

The CBCI president has asked all to begin now to educate our clergy and people in interritual matters! An imperative long over due since the Vatican Council! This education should have begun in the seminaries. The only papal seminary in India is the present J. D. V in Poona and it is a pity that so far the letter of the Pope has not created any impact on the authorities. The attitude prevailing among authorities seems to be "the

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Mongols; the nearly permanent presence of Christian secretaries (some of them became quasi-vizirs), as well as astronomers-astrologers; the uneven application on the Christians of the discriminatory measures, foreseen by Islamic tradition, such as vestimetry restrictions and special taxes; quarrels, often bloody, among the Muslims themselves, above all, between Shieites and Sunnites, which could eventually affect the local Christians. Much of those factors, besides several minor ones, are analyzed by the author not only with great precision, but also often with a deep sense of humour.

It cannot be said that any systematic persecution of Christians was launched by any of those caliphs, yet there were many outbursts of anti-Christian sentiment, coming either from the populace, or from high-placed officials, or even from one of the rulers, who happened to dislike religious minorities. Such outbursts could only last a few hours, enough, however, to destroy, at least to damage, Christian buildings. For instance, the catholicos' residence in Baghdad had to be restored, if not rebuilt, so many times! It was also due to anti-Christian reactions that Takrit, the see of the Jacobite maphrian, had to be abandoned between 1089 and 1106.

A certain state of oppression, between periods of real peace and prosperity, explains why the conquest of Baghdad by the Mongols was greeted by all Christians as a liberation. Granted that the latter were never suppressed by force under the Abbassids, it remains that they had become increasingly margined. Indeed the Islam of the Arabs can be regarded as tolerant, though tolerance with a vengeance. The minorities were treated with condescendance, as necessary evils, not as contributing to religious cnticement. Tolerance based on a superiority complex is no real tolerance. It is religious dominance tempered by contrivances to keep peace. They included state-interferences in patriarchal elections, the bakhshesh, and the exile of unending prelates. Divisions among the Christians themselves did not always help them to present a common front. History repeats itself, such as the tensions existing among Christians in the today's Lebanon, so much torn already into pieces.

E. R. Hambye s. j.  
Rome

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the decision joyfully. Unfortunately very little is being done, on the contrary negative propaganda is going on in the Latin Church. The seminar was an occasion to conscientise the Seminarians and the Staff.

### 3. Oriental Churches Represented at October 1987 Synod

**Patriarchs - Their Beatitudes:**

Stephanos II Ghattas, Patriarch of Alexandria of the Copts; Maximos V. Hakim, Patriarch of Antioch of the Catholic Greek Melkites; Ignace Antoine II Hayek, Patriarch of Antioch of the Syrians; Nasrallah Pierre Sfeir, Patriarch of Antioch of the Maronites; Paul II Cheikho, Patriarch of Babylon of the Chaldeans; Jean Pierre XVIII Kasparian, Patriarch of Cilicia of the Armenians.

**Major Archbishop:**

His Eminence Cardinal Myroslav Ivan Lubachivsky, Major Archbishop of Lwow of the Ukrainians.

**Metropolitans outside the Patriarchates of the Catholic Churches of the Oriental Rite:**

His Eminence Cardinal Paulos Tzadua, Metropolitan Archbishop of Addis Abada of the Ethiopians;

**Their Excellencies:**

Most Rev. Benedict Mar Gregorios, Metropolitan Archbishop of Trivandrum of the Syro-Malankarese; Most Rev. Maxim Hermaniuk, Metropolitan Archbishop of Winnipeg of the Ukrainians; Most Rev. Stephen J. Kocisko, Metropolitan Archbishop of Pittsburgh of the Byzantine Rite; Most Rev. Antony Padiyara, Metropolitan Archbishop of Ernakulam; Most Rev. Stephen Sulyk, Metropolitan Archbishop of Philadelphia of the Ukrainians; Most Rev. Joseph Powathil, Metropolitan Archbishop of Changanacherry of the Syro-Malabarese.

### 4. Cardinal Sidarouss Expires

Stephanos Cardinal Sidarouss, Patriarch Emeritus of the Coptic Catholic Church, died at the age of 83, in Cairo. There are about 200,000 Coptic Catholics in Egypt. Cardinal Sidarouss became Patriarch in 1958, and resigned in 1985.

### 5. New Chaldean Church Dedicated

On Saturday afternoon, September 12th, 1987, Bishop Ibrahim N. Ibrahim of Detroit, U. S. A., dedicated the new St. Paul Assyro-Chaldean Rite Catholic Church. Besides the large crowd of laity present at the function, there were also many Chaldean, Byzantine, Latin and Assyrian Apostolic clergy. Most Rev. Joseph Garmis, Chaldean Archbishop of Baghdad and the Most Rev. Thomas V. Dolinay of the Byzantine Rite Eparchy of Van Nuys assisted at the dedication ceremony.

### 6. Pope speaks for Eastern Rite Catholics

Pope John Paul II, in a talk to 18 bishops from the Eastern Rite Ukrainian Church on September 29, appealed to the authorities to give full freedom to the Ukrainian Catholics in the Soviet Union to openly worship in their own rite. The government had forced them to join the Orthodox Church in 1946. The Latin-rite Catholic Church was however allowed to continue. Pope said that the Ukrainians should be allowed to worship "in the faith of their ancestors, in their own rite and in union with their own priests and the bishops of Rome". It is reported that there are about 1.5 million Ukrainian Catholics living outside the Soviet Union, and that about 4 million Catholics may practice their faith secretly in the Ukrain. (Van Nuys News Letter).

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